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Factors Influencing the Selection of Business Majors as Perceived by Transfer and Non-Transfer Business Students.

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FACTORS INFLUENCING THE SELECTION OF BUSINESS MAJORS AS PERCEIVED BY TRANSFER AND NON TRANSFER BUSINESS STUDENTS

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This dissertation is dedicated to the writer's parents, Norman and Helen Jenkins.

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ABSTRACT

The objectives of this study were to: (1) describe the students enrolled in the two-year business programs offered by state colleges and universities in Louisiana on selected demographic characteristics, (2) compare the students declaring transfer and non transfer majors in two-year business programs on selected demographic characteristics, (3) determine the influence of selected factors on the selection of a two-year business major, (4) determine the desirability of two-year business majors as perceived by students enrolled in Louisiana colleges and universities, which offer two-year business programs, and (5) determine the perceptions of students enrolled in Louisiana colleges and universities on selected aspects of two-year business majors.

A researcher designed questionnaire was administered to a modified cluster sample of 258 business students in all twelve of the state colleges and universities in Louisiana which offer two-year business programs of study. One sophomore level Accounting class at each of the twelve universities participated in the study.

Findings indicated that the respondents enrolled in transfer and non transfer programs were similar when

compared on selected demographic characteristics, but the respondents differed on high school preparation. More than one-third (38.5%) of the transfer students completed a general program in high school, while only about one-fourth (24.3%) of the non transfer students completed a general program. Additional differences were observed where less than two percent (1.9%) of the transfer students and over 16 percent (16.2%) of the non transfer students completed vocational programs in high school.

Further research should be conducted to determine if there are specific differences between high school general education and high school vocational education programs. Three recommendations for practice are: (1) high school transcripts of general education graduates and vocational education graduates should be compared to determine if there are similarities and differences, (2) colleges and universities that offer two-year business programs should concentrate recruitment efforts in high school vocational education programs, and (3) factors used by respondents when selecting a major should be emphasized as colleges and universities prepare recruitment materials. After the materials are used in the recruitment process, additional research should be conducted to determine their effectiveness.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

According to the most recent edition of the "Occupational Outlook Handbook," ("Occupational Outlook Handbook," 1994) the job outlook for the future will be affected by changes in the size and nature of the country's population. Overall, the country's population will grow more slowly. In addition, the makeup of the population regarding demographic characteristics is changing. In the coming years there will be a greater proportion of teens, and an increase in minorities and immigrants. These changes, combined with the population growth, will influence the demand for goods and services and produce changes in the size and characteristics of the labor force.

The U. S. Department of Labor predicts that total employment will increase from 121.1 million in 1992 to 147.5 million in 2005, or by 22 percent. The 26.4 million jobs that will be added to the U. S. economy by 2005 will not be evenly distributed across major industrial and occupational groups. Service occupations will increase dramatically. Service-producing industries, including transportation, communications, and utilities; retail and wholesale trade; services; government; and finance, insurance, and real

estate are expected to account for approximately 24.5 million or more than 90 percent of the 26.4 million new jobs over the 1992 - 2005 period. Of the areas mentioned, the services division contains 15 of the 20 fastest growing industries. Expansion of service sector employment is linked to a number of factors, including changes in consumer tastes and preferences, legal and regulatory changes, advances in science and technology, and changes in the way businesses are organized and managed.

Continued faster than average employment growth among occupations that require relatively high levels of education or training is expected. Education will be critical in finding a well-paying job. Fewer jobs will be available for those who do not complete high school, as the low-skill jobs will be going overseas, where employers can find less expensive labor. Most of the top jobs for the next ten years will demand employees with some advanced education, but not necessarily a four-year degree. Approximately 17.9 million four-year graduates are projected to join the labor force during the 1992 - 2005 period. However, during the same period, 13.7 million jobs requiring college degrees are expected to open. Because the number of college graduate jobseekers will grow more quickly than the number of

college-level jobs, nearly 25 percent of new entrants are expected to settle for jobs that do not require a college degree or may even be unemployed ("Occupational Outlook Quarterly," 1994).

Across the United States, more than five million students are enrolled full time in associate degree programs. Two-year associate degree programs are proving an increasingly popular path for career preparation. In the ten-year period spanning 1975 - 1985, the number of associate degrees awarded annually increased by 24%, from 360,171 to 446,047. The literature shows projections of college associate degrees conferred will increase from 490,000 in 1994 to 557,000 in 2003 ("Nation's Students," 1993).

Most associate degree programs are considered to be non transfer programs in that they often do not provide easy access to a four-year degree program. Associate degree students enrolled in two-year transfer programs usually consider themselves to be four-year program participants. Even the completion of the first two years of the transfer program provides very little benefit to the student in terms of salary schedules and job opportunities when compared with a student who has completed a two-year program leading to an associate degree.

An associate degree has clear economic benefits. In 1987 - 1988, community colleges awarded 85% of all associate degrees conferred. According to Palmer (1987-88), educators at these institutions have long been interested in gauging the incremental income earned by high school graduates who decide to continue their education and complete an associate degree program. Few statistical sources provide indicators of the economic advantages accrued to degree recipients. Palmer (1987-88) states that this is because most studies correlating income with education data, typically measure educational attainment in terms of years of schooling rather than the type of educational credential earned.

Consequently, those studying the economic benefits of the associate degree have usually had to compare the incomes of those possessing a high school diploma with the incomes of those who have one to three years of college. The latter group may include associate degree graduates as well as individuals holding no associate degree but who have 1-3 years of post-secondary education (Palmer, 1987-88).

Data from the Bureau of the Census (1987), however, compares the earnings of adults with different educational credentials and provides a rare national insight into the incomes of associate degree recipients. According to Palmer

(1987-88), the data substantiate what has long been taken for granted: Individuals holding associate degrees earn more than either high school graduates (+29%) or persons attending postsecondary programs but not attaining an associate degree (+15%). Associate degree holders have a similar advantage over those who do not complete a postsecondary credential. Students who attend college without earning the bachelor's degree might do better to finish an associate degree program rather than leave college without a credential even with three years or more completed (Palmer, 1987-88). Kroe (1987) reports that the majority (55%) of associate degree recipients are women. Women also account for most of the growth in associate degrees awarded since 1974 - 75. The number of associate degrees awarded to women increased 49% in the ten-year period 1975 - 1985 as compared to only 6% for men. The income advantages of the associate degree are particularly strong for African/Americans and women. African/Americans with an associate degree earn 51% more than African/Americans with only the high school diploma. Women with associate degrees earn 40% more than women with the high school diploma (Palmer, 1987-88). Four broad subject areas accounted for approximately 78% of all associate degrees awarded: business and management (26.6%);

liberal arts/general studies (23.4%); health sciences (15.1%); and engineering technologies (13.2%).

Almost all jobs expect employees to have the basic skills taught by business educators. These skills will give the student a firm foundation. Business courses in community colleges and universities further prepare the student for top jobs. The most promising jobs of the future are for individuals with basic business backgrounds. According to the "Occupational Outlook Handbook," 1994, the major growth industries providing opportunities for business skills include:

1. Business Services
2. Health Services
3. Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate
4. Transportation, Communication, and Public Utilities
5. Government
6. Administrative Support

The current economic climate is favorable for tech prep initiatives. Today's information-heavy marketplace calls for people with technical skills and knowledge. Much of the training and education in business-related occupations will be provided through tech prep programs. Articulation between secondary and postsecondary business education

programs will eliminate the redundancies within a student's instructional program. More and more students are likely to enroll as they see advantages to this career preparation. They can take courses at the secondary level that may enable them to test out or bypass courses at a two-year institution. The two-year institutions, which work closely with four-year colleges and universities, will create a smooth transition for the students to achieve their degrees (Kaser, 1994).

For tech prep to be effective, high schools, two-year institutions, and four-year colleges and universities must cooperate. Their goals should include helping students make the transition between secondary and postsecondary learning as efficient a move as possible. One way to achieve this objective is to examine curricula at all levels to make sure that course duplication is minimized. Articulation agreements are intended to be used to address this concern.

Gender is an important factor in the choice of academic major. In particular, women are more likely to enroll in allied health programs while men are more likely to major in engineering-related fields (Palmer, 1987-88, p. 56). Palmer states that other factors influencing the selection of an academic major might include: age, marital status, number

of dependents, employment status, and occupations of parents.

The ACT Occupational Classification System provides the overall structure used to organize occupations in "Discover." Individuals are introduced to job clusters similar in nature to the occupational groups described by Roe (1956), Super (1957), and Holland (1985). "Discover," a computer--based system, is used in the career-planning process. The software helps to determine what values and characteristics are important when selecting an occupation. The purpose of the values inventory is to help the individual become aware of work values. The values commonly found in the workplace are:

1. Accomplishment
2. Interests
3. Recognition
4. Economic Rewards
5. Responsibility
6. Getting and Keeping a Job
7. Adventure
8. Work Environment
9. Independence
10. Convenience
11. Creativity
12. Working with People

Important characteristics to consider when selecting an occupation might include the following items:

1. Employment Outlook
2. Travel Required
3. Work Hours
4. Beginning Income

5. Unusual Pressure 6. Physical Strength

7. Supervision of Others 8. Education Level

The literature shows a changing environment, future jobs mostly in service areas (many requiring a business background), and enrollments in two-year programs on an increase. Even with increasing enrollments, the demand for program completers in business areas exceeds the supply. Therefore, effective recruitment efforts for these programs would not only benefit the students who will be prepared in an area with plentiful job opportunities but will also benefit the business community by having an increased supply of well prepared employees. In order to develop effective recruitment strategies, these items need to be known: (1) demographic characteristics of the individuals currently enrolled in the programs, (2) factors which are identified as being influential in the selection of a program, and (3) overall image of the programs as perceived by the individuals enrolled in the programs.

In summary, individuals select occupations based on a wide variety of factors. People earning associate degrees have larger salaries than high school graduates or individuals with some postsecondary education. Given that as many as 70 percent of the jobs in the year 2005 will not require

a baccalaureate degree, it is highly advantageous for individuals to prepare adequately for rewarding careers in less than four years of study. For individuals who want to learn a special skill, improve their knowledge in a technical area, or reenter the workforce, an associate degree is the practical choice.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study was to describe students enrolled in two-year business programs of study offered by state colleges and universities in Louisiana. In addition, the study sought to identify factors which influenced student decisions regarding the selection of a transfer or non transfer major.

Objectives

Specific objectives of the study were to:

1. Describe the students enrolled in the two-year business programs offered by state colleges and universities in Louisiana on the following demographic characteristics: major, age, gender, marital status, the population size of the community where they were raised, grade point average (GPA), and occupation(s) of parents.

2. Compare the students declaring transfer and non transfer majors in two-year business programs on the

following demographic characteristics: age, college grade point average, high school grade point average, number of dependents, gender, marital status, employment status, employment necessity to continue education, employment directly related to present curriculum, spouse employment, residential status, community population, and ethnicity.

3. Determine the influence of selected factors on the selection of a two-year business major.

4. Determine the desirability of two-year business majors as perceived by students enrolled in Louisiana colleges and universities, which offer two-year business programs.

5. Determine the perceptions of students enrolled in Louisiana colleges and universities on selected aspects of two-year business majors.

Definition of Terms

1. Non Transfer Program--courses taken at an educational institution which will result in the completion of a two-year degree. Associate degree in this study is synonymous with non transfer degree.

2. Transfer Program--courses taken at an educational institution which will apply toward a baccalaureate degree completed at a four-year college or university.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Importance of Business Programs

Teachers have helped to build a cohesive and stable nation by preparing millions of students to effectively participate in family, civic, and economic life. Now as the end of the century approaches, everything about people and the environment is changing: the makeup of the population, family groups and patterns of family living, the nature of the economy, the demands of the workplace, and the capacity of technology to transform lives. The students of today will work in a very different era.

American businesses are increasing their dependency on sophisticated technology. This demands workers with higher level skills taught typically by business educators. The mix of these required skills and how they are used in the workplace has also changed dramatically and will continue to change with the evolution of technology. The employment trend in all job sectors including administrative, service, marketing, production, and information systems has changed from an unskilled workforce to a technologically-based workforce. By the year 2000, it is projected that less than 15 percent of the available jobs will be unskilled. A

technological-based workforce requires workers to have a new set of knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Current literature often refers to this new set as the expanded basics. As its name implies, the basics have been expanded to include skills such as decision-making and problem-solving, using information systems, oral communication, logic, creative thinking, listening, teamwork, and leadership skills. Today's worker requires new and different skills for success in the work world (Miles, 1994).

Job-specific skill training for businesses will increase in importance in the next five to ten years. Currently more than half of high school graduates do not go to four-year colleges or universities, yet businesses need employees with training beyond high school. In addition, individuals with college degrees will return to school as they seek to change careers, to expand employability options, or to update technological skills. Business educators must provide leadership by creating linkages and developing relevant curricula for and about business (Business Education Forum, 1994).

Importance of an Advanced Education

Society has entered into an age of information and technology. Because of this movement, jobs require more

education and more highly skilled employees. Inman (1989) stated that by the year 2000, numerous labor market changes will occur. He predicted that because of technology, 25 to 35 percent of the present jobs will become obsolete and that over 25 million new jobs will evolve. He further predicted that service and information industries will compose over 75 percent of the new jobs. Fenner (1989) predicted that in the 1990s, new jobs would require more education and more highly skilled workers due to technology. Johnston and Packer (1987) predicted a greater demand during the 90's for higher skill levels in new jobs than in the jobs of the 80's and the past. They go on to say that to make a productive contribution to the economy, the amount of education and knowledge needed will increase. They emphasized that for the first time in history, a majority of all new jobs will require additional education beyond the high school level. Postsecondary education is considered advanced education (Johnston and Packer, 1987).

Advanced education is an asset. This type of education is becoming the preferred choice and is a prerequisite for employment in some companies. Individuals employed in jobs not requiring postsecondary education are likely to have low wages. For several decades, occupations that require more

education have been growing faster than occupations requiring less education. A greater proportion of workers with higher levels of education are found in occupations growing the fastest. The slower growing or declining occupations have more workers with less education. This does not, however, mean that everyone must have a four-year college degree to find a job. Nevertheless, an increasingly important difference is emerging in the opportunities available to people, depending on their educational preparation (Kutscher, 1992).

Students with associate degrees can expect to earn more than $1 million during their lifetime, according to figures compiled by the U. S. Census Bureau. The bureau's report emphasizes the direct tie between level of education and earning power. The gap between the earnings of people with a high school diploma and those with a more advanced education has grown over the last two decades. The bureau reported that the earnings of high school graduates have just barely kept up with inflation, while graduates with advanced education have, on average, experienced real growth in their earnings. Lifetime earnings for high school graduates are projected to be about $821,000 while associate degree

holders can anticipate $1,062,000 in earnings over a lifetime (Bureau of the Census, 1994).

Education is important as America moves into the 21st century. The increasing complexity of most of the business world means that a higher level of literacy is essential in order to keep pace with technological changes. Workers need to have the educational foundation that will enable them to think critically so that they can diagnose problems rather than just follow a set of established procedures. They also need a good foundation on which to continue to build their knowledge and skills, because the pace of change will accelerate even faster, not only in technology but in the uses being made of technology to distribute information electronically. People who do not know how to get access to information will be left behind. For people without knowledge and skills acquired through advanced education, opportunities are dwindling. The prospects for students who do not even complete a high school diploma are grim (Bureau of the Census, 1994).

As more and more jobs require technical skills and as the job market becomes restructured in response to the emerging high tech/service economy, profound changes in the way people work on the job are becoming apparent. Many

people in the current workforce are lacking in the skills needed to survive such changes. Deficiencies in basic skills of reading, writing, and math have been the first to surface, but increasingly higher-level skills are being needed but not found. Today's employers are seeking individuals with the following workplace basics: (1) adaptability, including creative thinking and problem solving, (2) listening and good oral communications, (3) group effectiveness: interpersonal skills, negotiation, and teamwork, (4) organizational effectiveness and leadership, (5) competence in reading, writing, and computation, and (6) ability to learn--to absorb, process, and apply new information quickly (Smith, 1994). Is it feasible to expect the high schools of today to accomplish all of this? No, therefore, most of these basics are acquired through advanced education.

Articulation of Education

High School to Advanced Education

Many young Americans who do not go to college are simply out of luck. High schools were designed to prepare students for college, not work. It is unclear--most of all to these students themselves--how they are benefiting from high school, other than that it gets them a diploma.

America is the only industrialized nation without a formal system for helping students prepare for work and enter the workforce (Miles, 1994).

The journey from school to work, for many young Americans, begins with several years of rough passage through a no man's land of low-paying, dead-end jobs. Employers are looking to hire mature individuals with work experience, not kids fresh out of high school (or who dropped out of high school). The fact is, fewer than one in 10 large American firms hire new high school graduates. One-third of America's youth fail to find stable employment by the time they reach 30. Meanwhile, those same businesses, in pursuit of productivity and competitiveness, are taking the first steps toward transforming themselves into high performance work organizations. Taking this step will require workers at all levels who can analyze data, communicate clearly, learn rapidly, participate in managerial decisions, and work well in teams (Miles, 1994).

Businesses are not getting an adequate supply of such highly skilled workers today. "More than half of the young people," reports the U. S. Department of Labor, "leave school without the knowledge or foundation required to find and hold a job." How can schools develop the kinds of

workers businesses must have to fill the kinds of jobs that must be created in order to compete in the 21st century?

"Workforce 2000" (1987) projected that as many as 70 percent of the jobs in the year 2000 would not require a baccalaureate degree. Yet Parnell (1985) reported in "The Neglected Majority" that at least 75 percent of public school students are not likely to earn a four-year degree. For these students, success in the world of work may hinge on effective educational programs located in a community/ junior college.

Nearly all high schools have a college preparatory track that addresses the educational needs of students who aspire to earn a college degree. However, for most students, this route is not suited to their personal needs. Tech prep provides an alternative for them.

For tech prep to be effective, high schools and community/junior colleges must cooperate. Their goals should include helping youths make the transition between secondary and postsecondary learning as efficient a move as possible. One way to achieve this objective is to examine curricula at both levels to make sure that course duplication is minimized. Articulation agreements are intended to be used to address this concern (Schoenbeck, 1993).

A definition of articulation in broad terms is the process for linking two or more educational systems within a community so that they help students make a smooth transition from one level to another. These agreements not only save tuition, they save time because they reduce delays in educational progress that are attributed to course duplication and the loss of credit. Articulation, as a major focus of tech prep, encourages communication among educators and the coordination of curricula between secondary and postsecondary education. This process benefits many students and provides prospective employers with better educated and trained personnel (Schoenbeck, 1993).

For many students the distance between high school and college is like climbing Mt. Everest, when it should be like walking a gentle grade crossing according to Parnell (1984). Much work must be done to encourage closer cooperation between high schools and colleges. This observation is especially important in light of the fact that the Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that 83 percent of the American population 25 and older do not hold a bachelor's degree and that approximately 86 percent of the adult population in the country continue to work at jobs that do not require the bachelor's degree. Of this number, an increasing percentage

require some postsecondary education and training, but less than the bachelor's degree. The Bureau of Labor Statistics also reports that of the 25 million new jobs to be created by the end of 1995, fully half this growth will occur in only 40 occupations, and only a few of these occupations will require a bachelor's degree for entry (Parnell, 1984).

Dale Parnell and the Intergovernmental Advisory Council on Education are advocaters of a two-plus-two "tech prep" curriculum that would culminate at the community college level. It is literally a four-year program. It is the answer for that great host of middle-quartile students who are not pursuing a "college prep" curriculum, and who often seem overlooked in the concerns about education (Parnell, 1984).

According to Parnell, there are six purposes and outcomes of tech prep: (1) complete rigorous programs which include higher expectation for all students in academic, career, and technology programs, (2) prepare all students for postsecondary education, the world of work, or both, (3) have all students develop a four-year high school program before completion of the eighth grade, (4) increase all students' level of academic, career, and technology education preparedness, (5) teach the essential concepts of

mathematics, science, and language arts through an applied academic process, and (6) implement an outcome-based curriculum and performance assessment process which focuses on application of knowledge and skills through problem solving and decision making.

Beginning with the junior year in high school, students could select the tech prep program (even as they now select college prep) and continue for four years in a rigorous and closely articulated curriculum. During their junior and senior years they usually would be taught by high school teachers, except for possible specialty areas. The program would have a solid base of applied sciences, applied math, literacy courses, and technical programs. The high school vocational education part of the program would be aimed at career clusters and systems study. It should be the aim of a first-rate secondary vocational education program to help the student develop more options and broader opportunities rather than fewer options and narrow job training options. The good technical jobs of the future will require more math, science, and literacy, and a broader technical base. All this will require close curriculum articulation and will require high school and college leaders to talk regularly with one another, as well as with employers. Furthermore,

continuous emphasis should be on the "why" of any general education learning (Parnell, 1984).

The strengths of tech prep can be translated into benefits. Tech prep promotes learning with a purpose. Students involved in tech prep know there is a reason for what they are learning. Tech prep integrates education. Tech prep refocuses education on career outcomes. Tech prep reaches the neglected majority. Tech prep offers new hope to students who do not do well in traditional classes. Tech prep gives students skills that employers need. Employers familiar with tech prep know that students in those programs are being taught relevant skills, including communication, problem solving, and critical thinking as well as technical skills (Williamson, 1994).

According to Parnell, a tech-prep program results in a win-win situation. The students know the "why" of their learning, and obtain a first-rate technical educational preparation. The community college gains a better prepared high school graduate. The employer gains a better prepared employee. The morale of the high school is elevated if that host of middle-quartile students is engaged in goal-oriented and rigorous study during their junior and senior years of high school (Parnell, 1984).

The School-to-Work Opportunities Act is nothing less than sweeping reform of secondary education. There is no one right way to ensure smooth passage for students into workplaces. Successful efforts are usually shaped by local conditions. The best programs adapt to take advantage of local resources and needs, piecing together interests, organizational structures, curricula, and employer contributions that best fit with local circumstances.

The School-to-Work Opportunities Act, passed in May, 1994, encourages partnerships among high schools, community colleges and business to prepare students for quality jobs that do not require four-year degrees. The required elements for this federal grant include: (1) school-based learning, (2) work-based learning, (3) connecting activities, (4) assurances of equal access, and (5) employer involvement. While no two school-to-work efforts are identical, experts have identified at least eight principles commonly found in successful programs. (1) Business is a major player. The key to success is a collaborative approach between the school and employers. Collaboration means business and industry sitting across from educators as equal partners at the table to work toward mutual goals. Behind every effective school-to-work effort, there are

committed business people. They know that well-prepared employees are indispensable to the high-performance work organizations they want their companies to become. (2) The community college is a pivotal role. Community/junior colleges play key roles in the best school-to-work efforts. They provide training and education beyond high school. (3) High standards are expected of all students. A tool communities can use to raise expectations for all students is national standards. Academic standards--what all students need to know and be able to do. Also in the developing stages, is a national movement toward skill or occupational standards for American industries. (4) There are incentives for students to meet these high standards. Academic and industry standards can be used for creating incentives that encourage students to get serious about schoolwork. Many school-to-work partnerships use jobs as a carrot. (5) Career guidance, exploration, and counseling are provided for all students. Career awareness, exploration, and planning should begin at the elementary school level and continue throughout the college experience. Objectives of this career exploration familiarizes students with many different job/career options, providing information on what is required to be successful in the positions,

and leading students to discover and explore their own interests and aptitudes. (6) Academic and technical learning is integrated into the classroom. Hands-on learning works best for at least 75 percent of all students. Students learn more when they are asked to solve practical problems and perform real-life tasks. (7) School-based learning is integrated with worksite learning. School-to-work partnerships are tightening the link between what students learn at school and at worksites. This often means increasing the time students spend in structured worksite learning. (8) Future preparation of students: jobs requiring technical skills and further learning, job-specific training, or postsecondary education. School-to-work programs are designed to prepare students not only for a job, but for further technical learning, as well as the pursuit of higher education (Dykman, 1994).

Community/Junior College to Four-Year University

The Junior College Association estimates that about two-thirds of the students who enroll in community colleges have no intention of transferring or earning a baccalaureate degree. Many take associate-degree programs to prepare for technical jobs in business and industry. Others take continuing-education or remedial courses. Few community

college students with poor academic and economic backgrounds transfer to four-year institutions and earn baccalaureate degrees (Watkins, 1990).

Lee and Frank (1990) report that the community-college students who continue their education are typically those with greater academic preparation and financial resources who could have attended a four-year institution in the first place. They are simply taking advantage of a less expensive alternative. About a quarter of the students who go to community college right after high school transfer to a four-year college within four years, probably to pursue a degree. Overall, only six percent of all high-school graduates take the community-college route to a baccalaureate.

Palmer (1987-1988) states that by most national estimates, roughly one-third of the students enrolled in two-year colleges plan to continue their education. But no more than one-fourth of them transfer to four-year institutions, and fewer than that earn baccalaureate degrees. According to James C. Palmer, associate director of the Center for Community College Education at George Mason University, transferring is "a tough bureaucratic task" for students. "It's like going from Washington to Los Angeles and

transferring in Chicago. You might miss the plane" (Palmer, 1987-1988).

Students who expect to transfer must select courses that will count for credit at a four-year institution, and must take the courses in the proper sequence. They must also follow procedures established for submitting their applications and transcripts for evaluation by four-year institutions. Students often need guidance in negotiating what can be a complex process, but the needed help is not always available (Watkins, 1990).

Two-year and four-year college systems in about 30 states have agreements that are intended to pave the way for students to transfer. Many two-year colleges and four-year colleges also have their own transfer agreements. In practice, however, some agreements are not always effective because they deal with broad principles rather than individual cases (Watkins, 1990).

From the beginning of the two-year college movement, agreements concerning the transfer of students and credits have existed between two- and four-year colleges. Over time, years of informal arrangements have been replaced with more formal, documented agreements by and between single

institutions designed to cover course equivalencies and program and curriculum articulation.

Statewide articulation generally occurs in one of three ways: (a) It is provided for through state-mandated policies and practices; (b) it occurs through voluntary statewide and inter-institutional agreements; or (c) it is provided for through formal, legally-based state policies. These three types of statewide articulation were initially identified by Kintzer in 1976, when he noted that about half of the states operated either formally and legally or through state system policies. The remaining states handled transfer on an individual basis, with no state direction mandated. Apparently, there has been little change since 1976, as "the national scene appears not to have changed significantly in terms of total state involvement" (Kintzer & Wattenbarger, 1985, p. 22).

While it appears that little progress has been made in increasing the number of states that take an active role in directing articulation either through formal legislation or statewide policy, the interest in improving the transfer articulation process appears to be growing. This interest, while encouraged by many state agencies, is best driven by institutions that realize the transfer articulation process,

while a national issue, is best dealt with within a local context (Barkley, 1993).

Trivett (1976) observes that the key ingredient to implementation of a successful articulation agreement is open communication between institutions. This can best be achieved by appointing an "ombudsperson for articulation" within the institution's administration, and assigning him/her the responsibility for improving articulation and assisting students who encounter transfer difficulties. Presidential commitment and heavy involvement of faculty in articulation efforts also play a key role in the development of successful agreements (Mohr and Sears, 1979).

Carefully developed catalog course descriptions also are very important in the articulation process, as they are often used when transfer credit decisions are made. Care should be taken to include the content, scope, and objectives of each course in descriptions. Once a course has been reviewed and accepted as transferable, it should be included in a transfer credit guide for use by counselors and faculty advisors (Smith, 1982).

Articulation agreements at the postsecondary level appear to be effective in facilitating the transfer of the community college student and provide a valuable service to

the student. As the number of high school graduates available to enter into university study decreases, a carefully developed and broadly accepted articulation agreement becomes an effective marketing tool by "guaranteeing" community college students of all ages who want to transfer, junior standing in the upper division institution with no loss of credit while, at the same time, assuring the receiving institution that a uniform and acceptable transfer process has been followed. Both elements are crucial if quality is to be championed in the rapidly changing environment of higher education (Knoell, 1982).

According to Barkley (1993), significant improvements in the transfer and articulation process were made during the 1980s. More states provide for articulation officers at each institution who assist students in the transfer process and facilitate faculty interaction between institutions. More states have developed course equivalency guides for use in counseling. Program requirements and course equivalency guides are slowly becoming computerized, accessible within state systems, and updated immediately. More states have established articulation coordinating boards and have encouraged faculty communication and participation in both two-year and four-year institutions.

In the past ten years, broad efforts have been made at the state, regional, and institutional levels to facilitate the smooth flow of students from high schools to community colleges to baccalaureate-granting institutions. These efforts have, in many cases, extended beyond the articulation and transfer of course credits. Community colleges have become involved in programs to improve the academic skills of high school students before they enter postsecondary education; in agreements that use student competencies as the basis of course and program articulation; in activities aimed at identifying, assessing, and tracking potential transfer students early in their postsecondary careers; and in the development of information systems to monitor and promote students' academic progress (Colby and Hardy, 1988).

Community colleges can offer a variety of services to encourage student persistence, including assistance with financial aid, advisement during registration, counseling, a faculty-student relations program, a transfer ombudsman, or an orientation program focusing on transfer information and procedures. Providing several of these services may be unrealistic for many community colleges; thus, the difficult task is to find the elements that enhance persistence (St. Clair, 1993).

In order for an articulation agreement to be effective, the process needs to include students, college personnel, curricula and degree requirements, and services to the students. Each institution's chief executive officer needs to recognize the need for articulation, and actively support the process (Missouri State Department of Higher Education, 1980).

Community college clientele during the seventies experienced a definite shift, as more adults enrolled parttime, largely in areas of continuing education. In the late 1970s, more people were choosing occupational/technical educational paths. At the same time the postwar baby boom pool of traditional college-prep persons was decreasing (California Community Colleges, 1982). A growing body of literature indicates that the traditional transfer student is changing within the community college: increasing numbers of transfer students are older and female, take longer than two years to complete a degree, and are likely to be employed at least part-time. However, an article in the Chronicle of Higher Education (Collison, 1991) also reports that traditional students (recent high school graduates) are enrolling in community college programs in increasing numbers because of the escalating costs of attending four-year

institutions and a growing recognition that a quality education can be obtained within their own communities. During a two-year period, many community colleges are experiencing a 13 to 17 percent increase in the traditional student population. According to James A. Caillier, president of Delgado Community College in Louisiana, "We must offer quality academic programs and have articulation agreements. Traditional students are coming to us demanding courses they can transfer. Community colleges that don't do this will suffer. We must recognize that the "transfer" student may well be anyone enrolled at the community college, be they in vocational or academic programs, young or old, recent high school graduates, or former high school dropouts" (Collison, 1991, p. A29). Institutions that had heretofore relied heavily on transfer enrollments are confronted with a different type of transfer student, and institutions which typically enjoyed the traditional college student are beginning to look to the transfer student as a means of maintaining their lagging enrollments (Bogart and Murphey, 1986-87).

Even though community colleges are being pressed to eliminate barriers that keep many of their students from transferring to four-year institutions, the students most likely to transfer come from families with social and

academic advantages. In high school, these students were in the academic track and took more mathematics and other academic courses. They graduated with high grades and high achievements. Those factors amount to direct and positive influences on students to transfer (Watkins, 1990).

Historical Mission of the Community/Junior College

The place of the junior college in the American educational system has been problematic from the beginning. Four-year baccalaureate colleges actually emerged before the system of common schools, particularly high schools, developed. The pattern of secondary schools (comprising academies, various types of seminaries, and Latin commercial, or English high schools) showed various tendencies over two centuries in terms of their organization and relationships with colleges. By 1900, the relationship between public high schools and colleges was fairly well fixed in practice as an educational model. When the public junior college emerged in the first decade of the twentieth century, it had to be introduced as a novel and intrusive institution. Two major appraisals of its role appeared over the first decade of its existence. In one model, it served as an opportunity mechanism allowing access to higher education for those who would otherwise be denied it. The second model arose from a

contradictory view that the junior college was or should be terminal (Frye, 1993).

In the 90-year history of the public junior college, the relative emphasis on these two roles has varied. The national leadership has emphasized one or the other at various times, while often speaking as if there were no conflict at all in the conceptualization of junior colleges. In practice, junior colleges have generally employed both models, so characteristically they provide both transfer programs and occupational programs (Frye, 1993).

In order to trace the development of the junior college in the United States, it is first necessary to point out that the term "junior college" has been used in the literature to describe widely differing types of institutions. A century ago, the choices available for the ambitious high school graduates included: a baccalaureate degree program at a college or university, or a professional, technical, or military school, depending upon grades and financial situation. For those children, predominately of the wealthy, who were not "scholars," and for whom neither of the traditional paths seemed appropriate, two alternative private academies sprang up. The first were called "finishing schools" with the purpose of producing cultured, well-rounded young men

and women ready to assume their high places in a democratic society. The second type was "college preparatory schools," offering the student extra, almost tutorial services to help ensure future success in the regular programs (Fields, 1962). The many "junior colleges" established between 1900 and 1920 were, for the most part, private institutions with one of these two missions.

By 1916, there were only 19 public junior colleges. These 19 public junior colleges were included with the private colleges in most of the literature concerning that period.

> The junior college, proposed and initiated both as an extension of secondary education and as an amputation from the university...grew until in 1921 there were 70 public and 137 private institutions (Thorton, 1966).

In 1919, the rationale for the junior college was explored. The results concluded that there were a number of benefits for both the university and the small four-year college. First, the freshman and sophomore class size would be reduced if many students took their first two years at a junior college. This would allow the four-year institutions to improve instructor/student ratios, as well as help in

allocation of facilities and resources. Secondly, the junior college could serve as both an extension of the secondary program and an introduction to higher education, making for a smoother transition (Thorton, 1966).

This primarily transfer function prevailed until about 1920. The years of junior college study was considered ideal to the bachelor's degree to be completed at the university. A different mission emerged as the public junior colleges proliferated:

> ...to attract and hold, for an additional two years of general culture and training, those students who would not go beyond high school (and to offer them) technical and other special preparation for life work (Fields, 1962).

Originally, California had classified its public junior colleges as secondary schools so that they could be funded on the same basis as the high schools. Recognizing that many of their students would not transfer into a four-year program, the University of California began to award an Associate in Arts degree. By 1921, there were 70 publicly supported junior colleges in California, and the American Association of Junior Colleges was founded. In 1928, the California State Department of Education issued a policy

paper titled "The Need for Terminal Courses in the Junior College," and the following year Los Angeles Junior College (now City College) agreed that "both cultural and utilitarian" terminal semi-professional courses were needed as much as transfer courses. Soon the terminal mission was established (Thorton, 1966).

One of the most extensive studies of the junior college movement and its purposes was conducted in 1921 by Koos (Fields, 1962). In 1930, Campbell looked at course catalogues and found 58.7% preparatory, 15.5% occupational, 13.6% "democratizing," and 11.8% "popularizing higher education" (Fields, 1962).

The earliest publicly supporting junior college still in existence was founded at Joliet, Illinois, in 1901. Whether the program was "terminal," or "transfer," the mission was (and is) "to serve those students not served anywhere else." According to Fields (1962), the role of the public junior college in the United States was to:

> ...provide terminal programs useful to the high-school graduate who would not pursue college work to the baccalaureate degree. But early in the short time the community college has been part of the educational

> scene, the role of the two-year college as a junior college preparing students for transfer to senior colleges was recognized.

The confusion as to whether and when the terminal or transfer function prevailed is due to the anachronistic use of the term "community college." Just as a distinction must be made between public and private junior colleges, so must the terms "junior" and "community" college be used correctly and not interchangeably (Boss, 1985).

By the early 1960s, the public junior colleges had, for the most part, shouldered their responsibility for providing multipurpose services including specialized "terminal" and college preparatory or "transfer" programs. Thorton (1966) states that some major recommendations for the junior college were that "educational programs that were less than four years should be located in the home communities of students," and "a fully organized junior college aims to meet the needs of a community" (Thorton, 1966). Because of demographic changes, more of their clients were "nontraditional students;" adults attending parttime, senior citizens, handicapped veterans, unemployed career-changers, and homemakers entering the workforce. Later, CETA trainees and Vietnamese refugees would require yet additional

modifications in the community college curriculum. Federal regulations and local needs pressured these schools to accept new responsibilities. It is literally a misnomer to call them "junior colleges" when they have assumed the additional functions of a "community college." Many have changed their names to reflect their expanded missions (Fields, 1962).

Some of the trends that have transformed the junior college into the community college are described by Frederick Kintzer (1976):

*Equality of educational opportunity

*Need for qualified manpower in all work classifications

*Innovative practices not attempted by universities

*Decentralization and regionalization of higher education

In 1982, a keynote article, "New Missions--New Goals, 1981," in The Community and Junior College Journal set forth the following priorities:

1. Leadership: public information
2. Advocate: cooperation with state councils and local agencies
3. Services: cooperation with government, media, etc.

4. Lifelong Learning: for adults and senior citizens
5. Educational Innovation and Issues: keeping up with research
6. Access to Postsecondary Education: commitment to open admissions
7. Professional Development Workshops: for college administrators and teachers

Presently, the mission of junior/community colleges is to serve the educational and cultural needs of the area by offering certificate and associate degree programs. These colleges develop relationships with local businesses and industries to identify area workforce needs. The colleges also work closely with four-year universities to further increase matriculation opportunities for students. Articulation does exist between high school and junior/community colleges and between junior/community colleges and four-year universities.

Students weighing the advantages of different career choices might refer to "The Job Outlook in Brief" published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. This publication provides outlook information in a format that allows easy comparison of job prospects in different fields. Employment prospects are not the only consideration when choosing a

certain career. Matching goals and abilities to the work done on the job and the education required are also important parts of choosing a career. Where one wants to live and how much money one wants to earn are important. The publication highlights significant job characteristics, including educational level required, working conditions, and interaction with data, people, and things (Gradler and Schrammel, 1994).

The findings of this study, as reported in Chapter IV, will address factors that influenced students to select a two-year business major.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Procedures

This study sought to describe students enrolled in two-year business programs of study offered by colleges and universities in Louisiana. In addition, the study sought to identify factors which influenced student decisions regarding the selection of a transfer or non transfer major.

This section describes the procedures used to: (1) identify the population and sample, (2) develop and field testing the instrument, (3) collect the data, and (4) analyze the data.

Population and Sample

The target population for this study was sophomore level students in business-related majors at two- and four-year state colleges and universities in Louisiana that offer two-year business programs. Sophomore level students were chosen since the second year of a two-year degree program was more likely to contain students who were committed to an identifiable major.

Using Cochran's sample size determination formula, the minimum required sample size for this study was determined to be 171.

$$n_o = \frac{t^2 s^2}{d^2} = \frac{(1.96)^2 (1)^2}{(.15)^2} = \frac{(3.8416)(1)}{.0225} = 171$$

where: t = risk (5%) (1.96)

s^2 = estimated variance (1.00)

d = acceptable margin of error (3%) (5-point Likert-type scale)

n_o = unadjusted sample size (Snedecor & Cochran, 1977)

The small population correction formula was not used in this study since an accurate estimate of the population size was not available.

A modified cluster sampling procedure was used. The sampling plan included the following steps: (1) All twelve of the state colleges and universities in Louisiana which offer two-year business programs were selected (see Appendix D). (2) A sophomore level course that was required of all business students at all twelve colleges and universities was identified by reviewing the business programs in each of the school's catalogs. The course selected was accounting principles. The specific accounting course section was identified in conjunction with the head of the respective college or university business program. (3) All students

present on the day of data collection in the identified course at each college and university were included in the sample.

Data were collected from 258 students at the sophomore level who were present on the day the researcher visited the campus and collected the data in the selected accounting courses. Of the 258 students, 91 were enrolled in two-year business programs and were the focus of the study.

Instrumentation

The instrument used (see Appendix A) was based on one designed by Echols (1990) in a study of business majors selected by current students. Revisions included the following modifications: (1) Echols used four-year programs in her study while only two-year programs were used in this study. (2) Degree and major designations used by Echols were different from the degree and major designations used in this study. The three-part design was maintained.

The research instrument consisted of three parts. Part I contained items designed to determine respondents' specific choice of major, their perceptions of the desirability of various business majors, and factors which influenced his/her choice of major. The desirability scale was a 5-point Likert-type scale with "1" indicating lowest

desirability and "5" indicating highest desirability. The influence scale used a 5-point Likert-type scale with "1" indicating lowest importance and "5" indicating highest importance.

Part II of the instrument contained items which dealt with general perceptions regarding careers in business. A Likert-type scale of "1" to "5" was used, with "1" indicating strongly disagree and "5" indicating strongly agree. Part III of the instrument asked questions regarding selected demographic characteristics.

The content validity of the instrument was established using a panel of experts. This panel consisted of vocational teacher educators at Louisiana State University and educators on both two- and four-year college campuses in Louisiana. The instrument was field tested by administering the questionnaire to a sample accounting course located on both a two-year and a four-year campus. (These course sections were not used in the study.) Twenty-eight responses were received and served as a field test of the instrument. Suggestions made by the panel of experts and results of the field test included the following revisions to the instrument: an introduction was added and several responses were worded directionally. The Cronbach's alpha procedure was

used to assess the reliability of the instrument from the field test data. The overall reliability was determined to be a = .86.

Data Analysis

An a priori alpha level of .05 was established. Procedures for statistical analyses were as follows:

1. The subjects were described on the variables of major, age, gender, marital status, the population size where they were raised, grade point average (GPA), and occupation of parents. Nominal variables (major, gender, marital status, population size of where they were reared, and parents' occupations) were summarized using frequencies and percentages. Interval variables (age and GPA) were summarized using means and standard deviations.

2. Demographic variables which were measured on a nominal scale were compared among the groups of majors using the Chi Square procedure.

3. Overall means and standard deviations for each of the identified factors were calculated and were presented in descending order of the mean influence value. The frequency and percentage of factors identified as the most influential were reported.

4. Overall means and standard deviations for each of the identified majors were calculated and were presented in descending order of the mean desirability value. The frequency and percentage of majors identified as the most desirable were reported.

5. The desirability mean was calculated for each group of majors. Also, differences among these groups were determined. The group means were presented for each major in descending order.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The findings presented are organized by the objectives of the study.

Objective 1

The first objective of the study was to describe the students enrolled in the two-year business programs offered by state colleges and universities in Louisiana on the following demographic characteristics: major, age, gender, marital status, population size of the community where they were raised, grade point average (GPA), and occupation(s) of parents.

Demographic Characteristics

The ages of the respondents, which are presented in Table 1, ranged from 18 to 45 years. The mean age of the respondents was 23.2 years. Seventy-five percent (66) of the respondents were 24 years of age or younger while only 6.8% (6) respondents were 40 years of age or older.

Of the 91 students who were enrolled in the two-year business programs of study offered by the state colleges and universities in Louisiana, 52% (n = 47) were females and 48% (n = 44) were males.

Table 1

Age of Respondents

Years of Age	n[a]	%
19 or younger	32	36.4
20-24	34	38.6
25-29	9	10.2
30-34	3	3.5
35-39	4	4.5
40 or older	6	6.8
Total	88	100.0

Note. Mean age = 23.2 years, SD = 7.0
[a]Three students did not respond to this item.

Respondents were asked to indicate their marital status. The majority of the respondents (78%) reported being single. The responses are presented in Table 2.

The number of dependents reported by the respondents ranged from 0 to 6. Sixty-eight (75%) of the respondents reported having 0 dependents (see Table 3).

Employment status of the respondents is presented in Table 4. Over one-half of the respondents reported that they were employed. Of those employed, 72.4% reported being employed parttime.

Respondents were asked if employment was necessary to continue their education. Of the 58 respondents who were employed, 57 responded to this item. Thirty-nine (68.4%) indicated that employment was necessary to continue their education while 18 (31.6%) stated that employment was not necessary. Respondents were also asked if their employment was directly related to their main curriculum choice. Only nineteen (34.5%) reported their employment to be related to their main curriculum choice, while 36 (65.5%) reported that employment was not related to their main curriculum choice. Three individuals did not respond to this item.

Table 2

Marital Status of Respondents

Status	n	%
Single	71	78.0
Married	12	13.0
Divorced or separated	7	8.0
Widowed	1	1.0
Total	91	100.0

Table 3

Number of Dependents of Respondents

Dependents	n	%
0	68	74.7
1	16	17.6
2-6	7	7.7
Total	91	100.0

Note. Mean number of dependents = .43, SD = 1.0

Table 4

Employment Status of Respondents

Status	n[a]	%
Employed full time	16	17.7
Employed parttime	42	46.7
Not employed	32	35.6
Total	90	100.0

[a]One student did not respond to this item.

The respondents were asked to indicate their residence status. Almost three-fourths (71.1%) of the respondents indicated that they lived at home (see Table 5).

The next item related to the size of the community in which the respondent was raised. As reflected in Table 6, the largest percentage (41.7%) of the respondents reported being raised in communities with populations of greater than 25,000. Only 23.1% of the respondents reported being raised in rural settings.

The respondents were asked to indicate the occupation of their mother and father on the questionnaire. For purposes of summarizing the data, the occupations were categorized into 10 groups, based on the Dictionary of Occupational Titles (1991) classifications. The categories included:

1. Professional, Technical, and Managerial
2. Clerical and Sales
3. Service
4. Agricultural, Fishery, Forestry, and Related Occupations
5. Machine Trades
6. Benchwork
7. Structural Work
8. Miscellaneous

Table 5

Residence Status of Respondents

Status	n[a]	%
Home	64	71.1
"On my own"	21	23.3
Dormitory	5	5.6
Total	90	100.0

[a]One student did not respond to this item.

Table 6

Population Size of Community Where Raised

Community Type	n	%
Large city (more than 25,000)	38	41.7
Town or small city (2,500-25,000)	32	35.2
Rural area (less than 2,500)	21	23.1
Total	91	100.0

9. Retired
10. Self-employed

Almost one-half (42.1%) of the respondents reported mothers being employed in Service Occupations. Thirty (37.1%) of the mothers were employed in Professional, Technical, and Managerial Occupations. Machine Trades Occupations, Bench-work Occupations, Miscellaneous Occupations, and Retired were the categories where the least number of mothers were employed (4.8%). The most frequently reported occupation of the fathers was Professional, Technical, or Managerial Occupations (46.5%). Nine (12.7%) of the respondents' fathers were employed in Machine Trades Occupations. Structural Work Occupations, Retired, and Self-employed were the categories where the least number of fathers were employed (14.0%). Reported occupations of the parents are detailed in Table 7. Specific occupations of the parents are listed in Appendix B and Appendix C.

Respondents were asked to report their college grade point averages. The mean college grade point average (GPA) reported by the respondents was 2.79 on a 4.0 scale. The range of GPAs was from 1.50 to 4.00. Over one-half (63.3%) of the respondents reported a GPA between 2.50 and 3.49 (Table 8).

Table 7

Occupational Classification of Parents

Classification	Mother's Occupation		Father's Occupation	
	n[a]	%	n[b]	%
Service	34	42.1	7	9.9
Professional, Technical, and Managerial	30	37.1	33	46.5
Clerical and Sales	13	16.0	7	9.9
Machine Trades	1	1.2	9	12.7
Benchwork	1	1.2	0	.0
Miscellaneous	1	1.2	0	.0
Retired	1	1.2	3	4.2
Agricultural, Fishery, Forestry, and Related Occupations	0	.0	5	7.0
Structural Work	0	.0	4	5.6
Self-employed	0	.0	3	4.2
Total	81	100.0	71	100.0

[a]Ten students did not respond regarding the occupation of mother. [b]Twenty students did not respond regarding the occupation of father.

Table 8

College Grade Point Average of Respondents

Grade Category[a]	n[b]	%
Less than 2.00	3	3.4
2.00 to 2.49	16	18.4
2.50 to 2.99	28	32.2
3.00 to 3.49	27	31.1
3.50 to 4.00	13	14.9
Total	87	100.0

Note. Mean = 2.80, SD = .6
[a]The grade point average scale was: 0 = F, 1 = D, 2 = C, 3 = B, 4 = A. [b]Four students did not respond to this item.

The respondents were also asked to report their high school grade point averages. High school GPAs are presented in Table 9. The mean GPA reported by the respondents was 2.85 with a range of 1.60 to 4.00. Forty-eight (59.3%) of the respondents reported a GPA between 2.50 and 3.49.

Data regarding ethnicity of respondents is presented in Table 10. Seventy-six percent (67) reported being Caucasian, while the least frequent ethnicity (1%) was Asian.

Respondents were asked to identify the primary focus of their high school education. College preparation was the primary focus of high school education for 53 (59.5%) of the respondents while 7 (7.9%) reported a vocational high school placement (Table 11).

Respondents were asked to indicate their choice of academic major (see Table 12). The major reported by the largest number of respondents was Accounting with 21 (24.2%). Business Administration was next with 20 (23.1%) followed by Computer Information Technology/Data Processing with 19 (21.9%). Four majors were reported by only one respondent. These majors included: Business Technology, Office Information Systems, Real Estate, and Secretarial Management.

Table 9

High School Grade Point Average of Respondents

Grade Category[a]	n[b]	%
Less than 2.0	3	3.7
2.00 to 2.49	12	14.8
2.50 to 2.99	29	35.8
3.00 to 3.49	19	23.5
3.50 to 4.00	18	22.2
Total	81	100.0

Note. Mean = 2.85, SD = .6
[a]The grade point average scale was: 0 = F, 1 = D, 2 = C, 3 = B, and 4 = A. [b]Ten students did not respond to this item.

Table 10

Ethnicity of Respondents

Ethnic Status	n[a]	%
Caucasian	67	76.2
African/American	17	19.3
Hispanic	3	3.4
Asian	1	1.1
Total	88	100.0

[a]Three students did not respond to this item.

Table 11

Primary Focus of Respondents' High School Preparation

High School Preparation	n[a]	%
College preparation	53	59.5
General education	29	32.6
Vocational (prepared for job-entry skills)	7	7.9
Total	89	100.0

[a]Two students did not respond to this item.

Table 12

Academic Majors of Respondents

Major	n[a]	%
Accounting	21	24.2
Business Administration	20	23.1
Computer Information Technology/ Data Processing	19	21.9
General Business	9	10.3
Office Administration (Secretarial)	8	9.2
Office Administration (Word Processing)	4	4.6
Management Assistant	2	2.3
Business Technology	1	1.1
Office Information Systems	1	1.1
Real Estate	1	1.1
Secretarial Management	1	1.1
Total	87	100.0

[a]Four students did not respond to this item.

Objective 2

The second objective of the study was to compare the students declaring transfer and non transfer majors in two-year business programs on the following demographic characteristics: age, college grade point average, high school grade point average, number of dependents, gender, marital status, employment status, employment necessity to continue education, employment directly related to present curriculum, spouse employment, residential status, community population, and ethnicity. A t-test was used to compare the transfer and non transfer groups on the variables: age, college grade point average, high school grade point average, and number of dependents. No significant differences were found between the groups at the .05 level (Table 13).

A Chi Square Test was used to compare the students declaring transfer and non transfer majors on the variables: gender, marital status, employment status, employment necessity to continue education, employment directly related to present curriculum, spouse employment, residential status, community population, and ethnicity. In each case, the variable of comparison was found to be independent of the program status of the respondents at the .05 level (see Table 14).

Table 13

Comparison of Selected Continuous Demographic Characteristics By Type of Two-Year Program

Variable	Program: Transfer	Program: Non Transfer	t	p
	n	n		
	$\bar{x}$	$\bar{x}$		
	sd	sd		
Age	52	36		
	23.0	23.4	.27	.78
	7.2	6.8		
College Grade Point Average	52	37		
	2.8	2.9	.91	.36
	.6	.5		
High School Grade Point Average	50	35		
	2.9	2.9	.37	.71
	.5	.5		
Number of Dependents	53	38		
	.3	.7	1.75	.09
	.7	1.3		

Table 14

Comparison of Selected Categorical Demographic Characteristics By Type of Two-Year Program

Variable	n	x^2	p
Marital Status	90	3.97	.14
Gender	91	3.46	.06
Community Population Size	91	2.94	.23
Spouse Employment	11	1.64	.20
Employment Directly Related to Present Curriculum	19	1.49	.22
Employment Necessity to Continue Education	39	.37	.54
Ethnicity	84	.15	.70
Employment Status	90	.34	.85
Residential Status	85	.10	.76

When comparing high school preparation between the transfer and non transfer groups using the Chi Square Test, significant differences were observed. The variables "High School Preparation" and "Type of Program" were not independent $x^2(2) = 6.94$, $p = .03$. About the same percentage of transfer and non transfer students reported completing college preparatory programs. However, more than one-third (38.5%) of transfer students completed a general program in high school, while only about one-fourth (24.3%) of the non transfer students completed a general program. Additional differences were observed where less than two percent (1.9%) of transfer students and over 16 percent (16.2%) of non transfer students completed vocational programs in high school. These data are presented in Table 15.

Objective 3

The third objective of the study was to determine the influence of selected factors on the selection of a two-year business major. Both transfer and non transfer respondents were asked to indicate the importance of various factors on their decision to select a particular business major. The response used was: 1 = No Importance, 2 = Little Importance, 3 = Some Importance, 4 = Much Importance, and 5 = Great Importance. To aid in interpreting the data, the

Table 15

Comparison of High School Preparation by Type of Two-Year Program

High School Preparation	Program	
	Transfer	Non Transfer
	n Exp Val Col % Residual	n Exp Val Col % Residual
College Preparation	31 31.0 59.6 .0	22 22.0 59.5 .0
General Education	20 16.9 38.5 3.1	9 12.1 24.3 -3.1
Vocational	1 4.1 1.9 -3.1	6 2.9 16.2 3.1
Total	52 100	37 100

Note. $x^2(2) = 6.94$, $p = .03$

following scale was established by the researcher for interpreting the mean importance values:

1.00 - 1.50	No Importance
1.51 - 2.50	Little Importance
2.51 - 3.49	Some Importance
3.50 - 4.49	Much Importance
4.50 - 5.00	Great Importance

Students Enrolled in Transfer Programs

Table 16 lists the overall means and standard deviations for each of the identified factors influencing students enrolled in transfer programs to select a particular business major. The data are presented in descending order by mean importance of the factor. No factors were found to be in the "Great Importance" category. "Potential for high income" was the factor which was found to have the highest mean importance score of 4.24. This factor was classified as "Much Importance."

Five additional factors were reported as being of "Much Importance":

(1) Type of work involved in this field (mean = 3.98)

(2) Prestige of the job (mean = 3.76)

(3) Offers broad job opportunities (mean = 3.76)

Table 16

Influence of Factors on Students' Selection of a Business Major as Perceived by Students Enrolled in Transfer Programs

Factor	n	$\bar{x}$[a]	sd
Potential for high income	54	4.24	.87
Type of work involved in this field	54	3.98	1.02
Prestige of the job	54	3.76	1.13
Offers broad job opportunities	53	3.76	1.10
Demand for people with this degree	54	3.57	1.06
To start my own business	54	3.52	1.38
To be of service to people	54	3.44	1.21
Prestige of degree program	54	3.26	1.28
Potential travel opportunities	54	3.00	1.30
Opportunity to return home to a position	52	2.94	1.32
Transferability of credit hours	54	2.83	1.41
Abundance of information supplied on major	54	2.65	1.15
Parental influence	54	2.44	1.28
Took related courses in high school	54	2.15	1.22
Influence of a summer job	54	1.91	1.10
Influence of high school guidance counselors	54	1.85	1.02
Influence of high school teacher	54	1.82	1.10
Influence of friends	54	1.72	.90

[a]Scale values include: 1 = No Importance, 2 = Little Importance, 3 = Some Importance, 4 = Much Importance, and 5 = Great Importance.

(4) Demand for people with this degree (mean = 3.57)

(5) To start my own business (mean = 3.52)

There were six factors considered to be of "Some Importance" (2.51 - 3.49) in the selection of a business major:

(1) To be of service to people (mean = 3.44)

(2) Prestige of degree program (mean = 3.26)

(3) Potential travel opportunities (mean = 3.00)

(4) Opportunity to return home to a position (mean = 2.94)

(5) Transferability of credit hours (mean = 2.83)

(6) Abundance of information supplied on major (mean = 2.65)

The factor with the lowest mean importance was "influence of friends" (mean = 1.72). This factor was classified as "Little Importance."

In addition, respondents were asked to indicate the single most important factor in selecting their business major. The data in Table 17 shows the frequency and percentage of factors identified by the transfer respondents as the most influential factor.

Almost one-third (32.7%) of the respondents identified "potential for high income" as the most influential factor in the selection of a major. Nineteen percent of the

Table 17

Most Influential Factor on Students' Selection of a Business Major as Perceived by Students Enrolled in Transfer Programs

Factor	n[a]	%
Potential for high income	17	32.7
To start my own business	10	19.2
Type of work involved in this field	9	17.3
To be of service to people	4	7.7
Opportunity to return home to a position	2	3.9
Potential travel opportunities	2	3.9
Offers broad job opportunities	2	3.9
Parental influence	1	1.9
Prestige of the job	1	1.9
Demand for people with this degree	1	1.9
Transferability of credit hours	1	1.9
Other	2	3.8
Total	52	100.0

[a]Two students did not respond to this item.

respondents identified "to start my own business" and seventeen percent of the respondents identified "type of work involved in this field" as the most influential factor. Eight other factors were selected as most influential by four or fewer of the respondents. In addition, two respondents indicated that some "Other" factor was most influential in the selection of a major.

Students Enrolled in Non Transfer Programs

Table 18 lists the overall means and standard deviations for each of the identified factors influencing students enrolled in non transfer programs to select a particular business major. The data are presented in descending order of the mean value of the importance of the factor. No factors were found to be in the "Great Importance" category. "Type of work involved in this field" was the factor which was found to have the highest mean importance score of 4.29. This factor was classified as "Much Importance." Three additional factors were considered to be of "Much Importance":

(1) Potential for high income (mean = 3.88)

(2) Offers broad job opportunities (mean = 3.74)

(3) To be of service to people (mean = 3.60)

Table 18

Influence of Factors on Students' Selection of a Business Major as Perceived by Students Enrolled in Non Transfer Programs

Factor	n	$\bar{x}$[a]	sd
Type of work involved in this field	35	4.29	1.05
Potential for high income	34	3.88	1.09
Offers broad job opportunities	34	3.74	1.11
To be of service to people	35	3.60	1.01
Prestige of the job	35	3.43	1.24
Demand for people with this degree	35	3.14	1.12
Opportunity to return home to a position	35	2.94	1.24
To start my own business	35	2.83	1.45
Prestige of degree program	35	2.77	1.26
Potential travel opportunities	35	2.60	1.31
Abundance of information supplied on major	35	2.60	1.24
Took related courses in high school	35	2.57	1.65
Transferability of credit hours	35	2.40	1.27
Parental influence	35	2.37	1.46
Influence of a summer job	35	2.11	1.49
Influence of high school teacher	35	1.77	1.19
Influence of high school guidance counselors	35	1.63	1.03
Influence of friends	35	1.54	.92

[a]Scale values include: 1 = No Importance, 2 = Little Importance, 3 = Some Importance, 4 = Much Importance, and 5 = Great Importance

Eight factors were reported as being of "Some Importance" (2.51 - 3.49) in the selection of a business major:

(1) Prestige of the job (mean = 3.43)

(2) Demand for people with this degree (mean = 3.14)

(3) Opportunity to return home to a position (mean = 2.94)

(4) To start my own business (mean = 2.83)

(5) Prestige of degree program (mean = 2.77)

(6) Potential travel opportunities (mean = 2.60)

(7) Abundance of information supplied on major (mean = 2.60)

(8) Took related courses in high school (mean = 2.57)

The factor with the lowest mean importance was "influence of friends" (mean = 1.54). This factor was classified as "Little Importance."

In addition, respondents were asked to indicate the single most important factor in selecting their business major. The data in Table 19 show the frequency and percentage of factors identified by the non transfer respondents as their most influential factors. Almost three-fourths of the respondents (70.6%) identified "type of work involved in this field," "potential for high income," or

Table 19

Most Influential Factor on Students' Selection of a Business Major as Perceived by Students Enrolled in Non Transfer Programs

Factor	n[a]	%
Type of work involved in this field	11	32.4
Potential for high income	9	26.5
Offers broad job opportunities	4	11.7
Opportunity to return home to a position	2	5.9
To be of service to people	2	5.9
Parental influence	2	5.9
To start my own business	2	5.9
Abundance of information supplied on major	1	2.9
Other	1	2.9
Total	34	100.0

[a]One student did not respond to this item.

"offers broad job opportunities" as the most influential factor in selection of a major.

Five other factors were selected as most influential by two or fewer of the respondents. In addition, one respondent indicated that some "other" factor was most influential in the selection of a major.

Comparison of Students in Transfer and Non Transfer Programs

The t-test was used to compare the transfer and non transfer groups on the influence of selected factors in the selection of a business major. Only one variable, "to start my own business," was found to be rated significantly different by the two groups ($t_{70} = 2.24$, $p = .02$). The transfer group had a mean importance score of 3.52. This factor was classified as "Much Importance." The non transfer group had a mean importance score of 2.83. This factor was classified as "Some Importance." (see Table 20)

Objective 4

The fourth objective of the study was to determine the desirability of two-year business majors as perceived by students enrolled in Louisiana colleges and universities, which offer two-year business programs. Both transfer and non transfer respondents were asked to indicate their perception of the desirability of each business major. Each

Table 20

Comparison of Influential Factors on Students' Selection of a Business Major By Type of Two-Year Program

Variable	Program: Transfer	Program: Non Transfer	t	p
	n	n		
	$\bar{x}$[a]	$\bar{x}$[a]		
	sd	sd		
To Start my Own Business	54	35		
	3.52	2.83	2.24	.02
	1.38	1.45		
Demand for People with this Degree	54	35		
	3.57	3.14	1.82	.07
Prestige of Degree Program	54	35		
	3.26	2.77	1.77	.08
	1.28	1.26		
Potential for High Income	54	34		
	4.24	3.88	1.62	.11
	.87	1.09		
Transferability of Credit Hours	54	35		
	2.83	2.40	1.51	.13
	1.41	1.27		
Potential Travel Opportunities	54	35		
	3.00	2.60	1.41	.16
	1.30	1.31		

(table con'd.)

Variable	Program: Transfer	Program: Non Transfer	t	p
	n	n		
	$\bar{x}^a$	$\bar{x}^a$		
	sd	sd		
Type of Work Involved in This Field	54	35		
	3.98	4.29	1.35	.18
	1.02	1.05		
Took Related Courses in High School	54	35		
	2.15	2.57	1.30	.19
	1.22	1.65		
Prestige of the Job	54	35		
	3.76	3.43	1.27	.20
	1.13	1.24		
Influence of High School Guidance Counselors	54	35		
	1.85	1.63	1.00	.31
	1.02	1.03		
Influence of Friends	54	35		
	1.72	1.54	.91	.36
	.90	.92		
Influence of a Summer Job	54	35		
	1.91	2.11	.71	.48
	1.10	1.49		
To be of Service to People	54	35		
	3.44	3.60	.66	.51
	1.21	1.01		

(table con'd.)

Variable	Program: Transfer	Program: Non Transfer	t	p
	n	n		
	$\bar{x}$[a]	$\bar{x}$[a]		
	sd	sd		
Parental Influence	54	35		
	2.44	2.37	.24	.81
	1.28	1.46		
Abundance of Information Supplied on Major	54	35		
	2.65	2.60	.18	.85
	1.15	1.24		
Influence of High School Teacher	54	35		
	1.81	1.77	.17	.86
	1.10	1.19		
Offers Broad Job Opportunities	53	34		
	3.75	3.74	.08	.93
	1.09	1.10		
Opportunity to Return Home to a Position	52	35		
	2.94	2.94	.00	.99
	1.32	1.24		

[a]Scale values include: 1 = No Importance, 2 = Little Importance, 3 = Some Importance, 4 = Much Importance, and 5 = Great Importance

major was rated on a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 indicating "Extremely Undesirable Major" and 5 indicating "Extremely Desirable Major." To aid in interpreting the data, the following scale was established by the researcher for the mean desirable majors:

1.00 - 1.50	Extremely Undesirable Major
1.51 - 2.50	Very Undesirable Major
2.51 - 3.49	Desirable Major
3.50 - 4.49	Very Desirable Major
4.50 - 5.00	Extremely Desirable Major

Students Enrolled in Transfer Programs

For students enrolled in transfer programs, the overall means and standard deviations of the perceived desirability for each of the business majors are shown in Table 21. No majors were found to be in the "Extremely Desirable," "Very Desirable," or "Extremely Undesirable" categories. There were three majors in the "Desirable" category. Business Administration had the highest perceived desirability score of 3.38 (sd = 1.04). Accounting and Computer Information Technology/Data Processing had the next highest perceived desirability scores with overall means of 3.17 and 3.06 respectively. Real Estate and Office Administration (Secretarial) were two of the majors with the lowest

Table 21

Desirability of Various Business Majors as Perceived by Students Enrolled in Transfer Programs

Major	n	$\bar{x}$*	sd
Business Administration	53	3.38	1.04
Accounting	53	3.17	1.34
Computer Information Technology/Data Processing	53	3.06	1.29
General Business	53	2.74	1.15
Business Technology	53	2.64	.98
Management Assistant	52	2.56	.83
Office Information Systems	52	2.46	1.09
Office Information (Word Processing)	52	2.42	1.26
Real Estate	52	2.25	1.12
Office Administration (Secretarial)	52	1.92	.97
Secretarial Management	52	1.77	.88

*Scale values include: 1 = Extremely Undesirable Major, 2 = Very Undesirable Major, 3 = Desirable Major, 4 = Very Desirable Major, and 5 = Extremely Desirable Major

perceived desirability mean scores of 2.25 and 1.92 respectively. Secretarial Management was perceived as the least desirable major overall with a mean score of 1.77 (sd = .88). All three of these majors were in the "Very Undesirable" category.

Respondents were also asked to indicate the business major that they would identify as the single most desirable major. The number and percentage of transfer respondents who identified a specific major as the most desirable major are presented in Table 22.

Four majors were named by more than 10 percent of the responding transfer students as the most desirable business major. Accounting was identified as the most desirable business major by about one-third (31.4%) of the respondents. Business Administration, General Business, and Computer Information Technology/Data Processing were the next three majors most frequently named as the most desirable major. Business Technology, Office Information Systems, Real Estate, and Management Assistant were rated by three or fewer students as the most desirable major.

Students Enrolled in Non Transfer Programs

For students enrolled in non transfer programs, the overall means and standard deviations of the perceived

Table 22

Most Desirable Business Major as Perceived by Students Enrolled in Transfer Programs

Major	n[a]	%
Accounting	16	31.4
Business Administration	12	23.5
General Business	9	17.6
Computer Information Technology/Data Processing	6	11.8
Business Technology	3	5.9
Office Information Systems	2	3.9
Real Estate	2	3.9
Management Assistant	1	2.0
Total	51	100.0

[a]Three students did not respond to this item.

desirability for each of the business majors are shown in Table 23. No majors were found to be in the "Extremely Desirable" or the "Extremely Undesirable" categories. Computer Information Technology/Data Processing, "Very Desirable Major," had the highest perceived desirability score of 3.85 (sd = 1.13). Four majors were in the "Desirable" category. Business Administration and Office Administration (Word Processing) had the next highest perceived desirability scores with overall means of 3.31 and 3.18 respectively. Office Administration (Secretarial) and Secretarial Management were two of the majors with the lowest perceived desirability mean scores of 2.64 and 2.52 respectively. Real Estate was perceived as the least desirable major overall with a mean score of 2.19 (sd = 1.14). This was the "Very Undesirable" category.

Respondents were also asked to indicate the business major that they would identify as the single most desirable major. The number and percentage of non transfer respondents who identified a specific major as the most desirable major are presented in Table 24. Three majors were named by more than 10 percent of the responding non transfer students as the most desirable business major. Computer Information Technology/Data Processing was identified as the most

Table 23

Desirability of Various Business Majors as Perceived by Students Enrolled in Non Transfer Programs

Major	n	$\bar{x}^a$	sd
Computer Information Technology/Data Processing	34	3.85	1.13
Business Administration	32	3.31	1.06
Office Administration (Word Processing)	33	3.18	1.26
General Business	30	3.07	.98
Management Assistant	30	3.07	1.17
Accounting	34	3.00	1.26
Office Information Systems	32	2.97	1.18
Business Technology	32	2.75	.95
Office Administration (Secretarial)	33	2.64	1.37
Secretarial Management	31	2.52	1.24
Real Estate	31	2.19	1.14

[a]Scale values include: 1 = Extremely Undesirable Major, 2 = Very Undesirable Major, 3 = Desirable Major, 4 = Very Desirable Major, and 5 = Extremely Desirable Major

Table 24

Most Desirable Business Major as Perceived by Students Enrolled in Non Transfer Programs

Major	n[a]	%
Computer Information Technology/Data Processing	11	32.4
Accounting	7	20.6
Office Administration (Secretarial)	4	11.8
Business Administration	3	8.8
Office Administration (Word Processing)	3	8.8
General Business	2	5.9
Management Assistant	2	5.9
Real Estate	1	2.9
Secretarial Management	1	2.9
Total	34	100.0

[a]One student did not respond to this item.

desirable business major by almost one-third (32.4%) of the respondents. Accounting and Office Administration (Secretarial) were the next majors most frequently named as the most desirable major. Business Administration, Office Administration (Word Processing), General Business, Management Assistant, Real Estate, and Secretarial Management were rated by three or fewer students as the most desirable major.

Comparison of Students in Transfer and Non Transfer Programs

The t-test was used to compare the transfer and non transfer groups on the perceived desirability of various business majors. Significant differences were found between the groups for six of the majors. For Computer Information Technology/Data Processing, the transfer group had a perceived desirability score (mean = 3.06), which was significantly lower than the mean for the non transfer group (mean = 3.85). The other five majors for which differences were identified were perceived as more desirable by non transfer students than by transfer students. These majors included Secretarial Management (transfer group mean = 1.77, non transfer group mean = 2.52), Office Administration--Word Processing (transfer group mean = 2.42, non transfer group mean = 3.18), Office Administration--Secretarial (transfer

group mean = 1.92, non transfer group mean = 2.64), Management Assistant (transfer group mean = 2.56, non transfer group mean = 3.07), and Office Information Systems (transfer group mean = 2.46, and non transfer group mean = 2.97). (see Table 25)

Objective 5

The fifth objective of the study was to determine the perceptions of students enrolled in Louisiana colleges and universities on selected aspects of two-year business majors. The mean scores for each of the 48 perception statements are presented in descending order of agreement in Table 26. In interpreting the data, the following interpretative scale was established by the researcher:

1.00 - 1.50	Strongly Disagree
1.51 - 2.50	Disagree
2.51 - 3.49	Undecided
3.50 - 4.49	Agree
4.50 - 5.00	Strongly Agree

The mean score represents the degree of agreement with the statement. The statement with the highest mean score, 4.33 (sd = .74), was "There is an increased demand for people with computer programming skills." This statement,

Table 25

Comparison of Perceived Desirability of Business Majors By Type of Two-Year Program

Variable	Program: Transfer	Program: Non Transfer	t	p
	n	n		
	$\bar{x}^a$	$\bar{x}^a$		
	sd	sd		
Computer Information Technology/Data Processing	53	34		
	3.06	3.85	3.03	<.01
	1.29	1.13		
Secretarial Management	52	31		
	1.77	2.52	2.95	<.01
	.88	1.24		
Office Administration (Word Processing)	52	33		
	2.42	3.18	2.71	<.01
	1.26	1.26		
Office Administration (Secretarial)	52	33		
	1.92	2.64	2.61	.01
	.97	1.37		
Management Assistant	52	30		
	2.56	3.07	2.10	.04
	.83	1.17		
Office Information Systems	52	32		
	2.46	2.97	1.97	.05
	1.09	1.18		

(table con'd.)

Variable	Program: Transfer	Program: Non Transfer	t	p
	n	n		
	$\bar{x}$[a]	$\bar{x}$[a]		
	sd	sd		
General Business	53	30		
	2.74	3.07	1.39	.17
	1.15	.98		
Accounting	53	34		
	3.17	3.00	.60	.55
	1.34	1.26		
Business Technology	53	32		
	2.64	2.75	.50	.61
	.98	.95		
Business Administration	53	32		
	3.38	3.31	.27	.78
	1.04	1.06		
Real Estate	52	31		
	2.25	2.19	.22	.82
	1.12	1.14		

[a]Scale values include: 1 = Extremely Undesirable Major, 2 = Very Undesirable Major, 3 = Desirable Major, 4 = Very Desirable Major, and 5 = Extremely Desirable Major

Table 26

Respondents' Perceptions of Various Careers and Two-Year Business Majors

Perception Statement	$\bar{x}$[a]	sd
There is an increased demand for people with computer programming skills.	4.33	.74
Two-year non transfer degree majors usually have lower grade point averages.	4.18	.73
Accounting is too personal and deals with too many social issues.	4.09	.77
Computer majors do not relate well to people.	4.03	.77
The less academically-gifted students major in a 2-year non transfer program.	4.03	.95
People who major in office administration/secretarial management/executive secretary/office information systems usually have good organizational skills, as well as technical skills.	4.03	.68
Two-year non transfer degree majors will have no relevance in the "real world."	4.00	.94
Management prepares one for strategic planning in the small business as well as the large corporation.	4.00	.61

(table con'd.)

Perception Statement	$\bar{x}$[a]	sd
The need for support staff with office administration/secretarial management/ executive secretary/office information systems skills is increasing.	3.97	.68
Computer information systems prepares one for broad job opportunities.	3.91	.81
General business provides a broad background in business.	3.91	.46
There is not much demand for a 2-year non transfer degree.	3.88	.74
Accounting has less professional status than other business majors.	3.88	.81
Office administration/secretarial management/executive secretary/office information systems majors have the advantage of learning specific business skills in addition to gaining a broad perspective.	3.85	.80
Business technology prepares one not only for a career but for everyday life.	3.84	.57
A major in a 2-year transfer degree is good preparation for a baccalaureate.	3.82	.85
A major in management sharpens one's communication skills.	3.82	.68
General business prepares students for a wide spectrum of jobs.	3.76	.44

(table con'd.)

Perception Statement	$\bar{x}$[a]	sd
Two-year non transfer majors are less ambitious than baccalaureate degree majors.	3.73	1.01
Management is too specialized--it does not cover other business functions.	3.73	.67
The business program with the lowest prestige is a 2-year non transfer degree.	3.70	1.05
People who major in office administration/secretarial management/executive secretary/office information systems have an excellent chance for promotion to management.	3.70	.64
Salaries for 2-year non transfer degree majors are low.	3.67	.92
Accounting is a growing field of employment with high paying jobs throughout the nation.	3.67	.74
Office administration/secretarial management/executive secretary/office information systems majors are less ambitious than other business majors.	3.67	.85
There are high-level positions for 2-year non transfer degree majors.	3.64	.96
The interaction with people as a real estate agent is a rewarding experience.	3.64	.60
A 2-year non transfer program is a narrow concentration.	3.55	.94

(table con'd.)

Perception Statement	$\bar{x}$[a]	sd
The business administration major is too applied--not enough emphasis on principles and theory.	3.46	.83
General business majors are not taught to think but rather to apply principles learned.	3.36	.82
If you cannot do anything else, you can earn a 2-year non transfer degree.	3.30	1.31
People with strong mathematics aptitude do best in accounting.	3.27	1.13
Real estate allows one to pursue more than one career at a time.	3.27	.84
Two-year non transfer degree majors narrow their options in business.	3.24	1.03
Computer majors usually can work flexible hours.	3.15	.91
A major in business technology is too management oriented.	3.13	.61
General business is too broad to prepare for most occupations.	3.12	1.11
Real estate provides for a flexible schedule in the work world.	3.09	.91
Real estate does not provide a steady income.	3.03	.92

(table con'd.)

Perception Statement	$\bar{x}$[a]	sd
Office administration/secretarial management/executive secretary/ office information systems majors must be willing to work in subordinate roles.	3.00	.87
Two-year non transfer degree majors make less money than baccalaureate degree majors.	3.00	.94
Real estate is a good road to wealth.	2.97	.86
Business administration offers more opportunities than other business majors.	2.91	.98
The most glamorous business major is management.	2.67	1.08
The brightest students in the business (school/department/program) major in a 2-year non transfer program.	2.36	.82
Computer majors are arrogant about their intelligence.	2.21	.96
The office administration/secretarial management/executive secretary/office information systems major is for secretaries only.	2.03	.68
Computer science is the field of choice for nerds.	1.52	.57

[a]Scale values include: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Undecided, 4 = Agree, and 5 = Strongly Agree

along with 27 other statements, were in the range of mean scores interpreted as "Agree" (mean = 3.50 - 4.49).

According to the interpretive scale, 16 of the statements fit in the "Undecided" category (mean = 2.51 - 3.49). The other 3 statements were disagreed with by the respondents, with the statement, "Computer science is the field of choice for nerds," receiving the lowest mean score of 1.52 (sd = .57). No items were in the "Strongly Agree" or "Strongly Disagree" categories.

Comparison of Students in Transfer and Non Transfer Programs

The t-test was used to compare the transfer and non transfer groups on perception statements about various careers and two-year business majors. Fourteen differences were found on the 48 statements. On 13 of the 14 statements, non transfer had significantly higher degrees of agreement. The perception statement, "There is not much demand for a 2-year non transfer degree," had a transfer mean score of 2.96. The non transfer mean score was 3.88. For the statement, "Salaries for 2-year non transfer degree majors are low," the transfer group had a mean score of 2.90, while the non transfer group score was mean = 3.67. The one item which was rated higher by the transfer group was "Computer science is the field of choice for nerds,"

(transfer group mean = 1.88, non transfer group mean = 1.52). (see Table 27)

In order to compute overall perception scores toward specific two-year business programs, items which were related to each of the specific majors (favorable or unfavorable) were grouped together to obtain subscores. The subscores consisted of approximately five items related to each specific major. Approximately one-half of the items on the instrument were worded favorably and one-half were worded unfavorably regarding the perception of specific majors. Therefore, before calculating subscores, those items worded unfavorably (reverse scale) were recoded so that all the items had the higher values associated with more favorable perceptions.

Data presented in Table 28 show the mean overall perception score for specific two-year business majors in descending order. The following interpretive scale established by the researcher was used for interpreting the data:

1.00 - 1.50	Strongly Unfavorable
1.51 - 2.50	Unfavorable
2.51 - 3.49	Undecided
3.50 - 4.49	Favorable
4.50 - 5.00	Strongly Favorable

Table 27

Comparison of Perceptions of Various Careers and Two-Year Business Majors By Type of Two-Year Program

Variable	Program: Transfer	Program: Non Transfer	t	p
	n	n		
	$\bar{x}^a$	$\bar{x}^a$		
	sd	sd		
There is not Much Demand for a 2-Year Non Transfer Degree	51 2.96 1.10	33 3.88 .74	4.59	<.01
Salaries for 2-Year Non Transfer Degree Majors Are Low	52 2.90 1.00	33 3.67 .92	3.60	<.01
A 2-Year Non Transfer Program is a Narrow Concentration	50 2.84 .84	33 3.55 .94	3.49	<.01
People who Major in Office Administration/Secretarial Management/Executive Secretary/Office Information Systems Usually Have Good Organizational Skills, as well as Technical Skills	49 3.57 .68	33 4.03 .68	2.99	<.01
There are High-Level Positions for 2-Year Non Transfer Degree Majors	51 3.02 .95	33 3.64 .96	2.88	<.01

(table con'd.)

Variable	Program: Transfer	Program: Non Transfer	t	p
	n	n		
	$\bar{x}$	$\bar{x}$		
	sd	sd		
Business Program with Lowest Prestige is 2-Year Non Transfer Degree	52 3.08 .84	33 3.70 1.05	2.87	<.01
Two-Year Non Transfer Degree Majors Usually Have Lower Grade Point Averages	50 3.68 .89	33 4.18 .73	2.81	<.01
Management is too Specialized--It does not Cover Other Business Functions	50 3.32 .79	33 3.73 .67	2.51	.01
Two-Year Non Transfer Majors are Less Ambitious than Baccalaureate Degree Majors	50 3.18 1.00	33 3.73 1.00	2.42	.01
Computer Science is the Field of Choice for Nerds	51 1.88 .95	33 1.52 .57	2.22	.02
Two-Year Non Transfer Degree Majors Will Have No Relevance in the "Real World"	50 3.56 .81	33 4.00 .94	2.21	.03
Less Academically-Gifted Students Major in a 2-Year Non Transfer Program	49 3.59 .93	33 4.03 .95	2.06	.04

(table con'd.)

Variable	Program: Transfer n $\bar{x}^a$ sd	Program: Non Transfer n $\bar{x}^a$ sd	t	p
Need for Support Staff with Office Administration/ Secretarial Management/ Executive Secretary/Office Administration Systems Skills is Increasing	52 3.63 .84	33 3.97 .68	2.01	.04
Computer Majors do not Relate Well to People	50 3.66 .92	33 4.03 .77	1.99	.05
People Who Major in Office Administration/Secretarial Management/Executive Secretary/Office Information Systems Have an Excellent Chance for Promotion to Management	50 3.42 .79	33 3.70 .64	1.77	.08
Two-Year Non Transfer Degree Majors Make Less Money Than Baccalaureate Degree Majors	50 2.62 1.01	33 3.00 .94	1.76	.08
General Business is Too Broad to Prepare for Most Occupations	52 2.71 .98	33 3.12 1.11	1.73	.08
Real Estate Provides for a Flexible Schedule in the Work World	50 3.42 .79	33 3.09 .91	1.70	.09

(table con'd.)

Variable	Program: Transfer	Program: Non Transfer	t	p
	n	n		
	$\bar{x}^a$	$\bar{x}^a$		
	sd	sd		
Real Estate does not Provide a Steady Income	50	33		
	2.70	3.03	1.69	.09
	.79	.92		
Office Administration/ Secretarial Management/ Executive Secretary/Office Information Systems Major is for Secretaries Only	51	33		
	2.33	2.03	1.67	.09
	.97	.68		
Management Prepares One for Strategic Planning in the Small Business as Well as the Large Corporation	50	33		
	3.78	4.00	1.60	.11
	.62	.61		
Real Estate is a Good Road to Wealth	50	32		
	3.28	2.97	1.58	.11
	.88	.86		
Two-Year Non Transfer Degree Majors Narrow Their Options in Business	51	33		
	2.90	3.24	1.50	.13
	.99	1.03		
Computer Majors are Arrogant About Their Intelligence	50	33		
	2.50	2.21	1.35	.18
	.93	.96		
If You Cannot do Anything Else, You Can Earn a 2-Year Non Transfer Degree	52	33		
	2.94	3.30	1.32	.19
	1.07	1.31		

(table con'd.)

Variable	Program: Transfer n / $\bar{x}^a$ / sd	Program: Non Transfer n / $\bar{x}^a$ / sd	t	p
Business Administration is Too Applied--Not Enough Emphasis on Principles and Theory	50 3.20 .93	33 3.45 .83	1.30	.19
Office Administration/Secretarial Management/Executive Secretary/Office Information Systems Majors are Less Ambitious than Baccalaureate Degree Majors	50 3.42 .93	33 3.67 .85	1.24	.21
Business Technology is Too Management Oriented	50 3.30 .71	32 3.13 .61	1.19	.23
Computer Information Systems Prepares One for Broad Job Opportunities	51 3.71 .81	33 3.91 .81	1.13	.26
Interaction with People as a Real Estate Agent is a Rewarding Experience	50 3.48 .65	33 3.64 .60	1.12	.26
Business Administration Offers More Opportunities Than Other Business Majors	52 3.15 1.03	33 2.91 .98	1.10	.27

(table con'd.)

Variable	Program: Transfer	Program: Non Transfer	t	p
	n	n		
	$\bar{x}^a$	$\bar{x}^a$		
	sd	sd		
Accounting Has Less Professional Status than Other Business Majors	51 3.61 1.10	33 3.82 .81	1.01	.31
Office Administration/ Secretarial Management/ Executive Secretary/ Office Information Systems Majors Must be Willing to Work in Subordinate Roles	49 3.20 .94	33 3.00 .87	1.01	.31
There is an Increased Demand for People with Computer Programming Skills	50 4.16 .82	33 4.33 .74	1.00	.31
A Major in Management Sharpens One's Communication Skills	51 3.67 .71	33 3.81 .68	.98	.33
General Business Prepares Students for a Wide Spectrum of Jobs	50 3.86 .54	33 3.76 .44	.96	.34
Accounting is Too Personal and Deals with Too Many Social Issues	51 3.92 .89	33 4.09 .77	.93	.35
General Business Majors are not Taught to Think But Rather to Apply Principles Learned	51 3.20 .87	33 3.36 .82	.89	.37

(table con'd.)

Variable	Program: Transfer n / $\bar{x}^a$ / sd	Program: Non Transfer n / $\bar{x}^a$ / sd	t	p
General Business Provides a Broad Background in Business	50 3.80 .70	33 3.91 .50	.86	.39
Business Technology Prepares One Not Only for a Career but for Everyday Life	51 3.73 .70	32 3.84 .57	.84	.40
Office Administration/Secretarial Management/Executive Secretary/Office Information Systems Majors have the Advantage of Learning Specific Business Skills in Addition to Gaining a Broad Perspective	51 3.73 .70	33 3.85 .80	.73	.47
A Major in a 2-Year Transfer Degree is Good Preparation for a Baccalaureate	50 3.68 .94	33 3.82 .85	.70	.48
Accounting is a Growing Field of Employment with High Paying Jobs Throughout the Nation	50 3.56 .93	33 3.67 .74	.58	.56
Most Glamorous Business Major is Management	52 2.73 1.03	33 2.67 1.08	.27	.78

(table con'd.)

Variable	Program: Transfer	Program: Non Transfer	t	p
	n $\bar{x}$[a] sd	n $\bar{x}$[a] sd		
Brightest Students in the Business (school/department/program) Major in a 2-Year Non Transfer Program	51 2.41 .88	33 2.36 .82	.26	.79
Computer Majors Usually Can Work Flexible Hours	50 3.18 .75	33 3.15 .91	.15	.88
Real Estate Allows One to Pursue More than One Career at a Time	49 3.24 .78	33 3.27 .84	.15	.88
People with Strong Mathematics Aptitude do Best in Accounting	52 3.29 1.16	33 3.27 1.13	.06	.95

[a]Scale values include: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Undecided, 4 = Agree, and 5 = Strongly Agree

Table 28

Respondents' Perception Subscores Toward Specific Two-Year Business Majors

Major	$\bar{x}$[a]	sd
Accounting	3.71	.50
Management Assistant	3.55	.48
General Business	3.54	.43
Business Technology	3.50	.45
Office Information Systems	3.46	.31
Real Estate	3.20	.36
Computer Information Technology	3.19	.30
Business Administration	3.18	.68

Note. The overall perception mean score is 3.42.
[a]Scale values included: 1 = Strongly Unfavorable, 2 = Unfavorable, 3 = Undecided, 4 = Favorable, and 5 = Strongly Favorable.

Four majors--Accounting, Management Assistant, General Business, and Business Technology had mean scores between 3.50 - 3.71 indicating "Favorable" perception of the major. The remaining four majors were in the "Undecided" category. There were no items in the "Strongly Unfavorable," "Unfavorable," or "Strongly Favorable" categories.

Comparison of Students in Transfer and Non Transfer Programs

The t-test was used to compare the transfer and non transfer groups on perception subscores. Only one difference was found between the transfer and the non transfer perception subscores. Management Assistant was rated higher by the non transfer group. (see Table 29)

Table 29

Comparison of Perception Subscores By Type of Two-Year Program

Variable	Program: Transfer n	$\bar{x}^a$ sd	Program: Non Transfer n	$\bar{x}^a$ sd	t	p
Management Assistant	52	3.35 .46	33	3.55 .48	1.97	.05
Office Information Systems	52	3.30 .46	33	3.46 .31	1.93	.06
General Business	52	3.36 .47	33	3.54 .43	1.79	.07
Accounting	52	3.57 .63	33	3.71 .50	1.17	.24
Computer Information Technology	52	3.15 .48	33	3.19 .30	.54	.58
Real Estate	50	3.23 .42	33	3.20 .36	.27	.79
Business Technology	51	3.51 .46	33	3.50 .45	.10	.92

(table con'd.)

Variable	Program			
	Transfer	Non Transfer	t	p
	n	n		
	$\bar{x}$[a]	$\bar{x}$[a]		
	sd	sd		
Business Administration	52	33		
	3.17	3.18	.06	.95
	.70	.68		

[a]Scale values included: 1 = Strongly Unfavorable, 2 = Unfavorable, 3 = Undecided, 4 = Favorable, and 5 = Strongly Favorable.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The purpose of this study was to describe students enrolled in two-year business programs of study offered by state colleges and universities in Louisiana. In addition, the study sought to identify factors which influenced student decisions regarding the selection of a transfer or non transfer major.

Specific objectives of the study were to:

1. Describe the students enrolled in the two-year business programs offered by state colleges and universities in Louisiana on the following demographic characteristics: major, age, gender, marital status, the population size of the community where they were raised, grade point average (GPA), and occupation(s) of parents.

2. Compare the students declaring transfer and non transfer majors in two-year business programs on the following demographic characteristics: age, college grade point average, high school grade point average, number of dependents, gender, marital status, employment status, employment necessity to continue education, employment directly related

to present curriculum, spouse employment, residential status, community population, and ethnicity.

3. Determine the influence of selected factors on the selection of a two-year business major.

4. Determine the desirability of two-year business majors as perceived by students enrolled in Louisiana colleges and universities, which offer two-year business programs.

5. Determine the perceptions of students enrolled in Louisiana colleges and universities on selected aspects of two-year business majors.

The target population for this study was sophomore level students in business-related majors at two- and four-year state colleges and universities in Louisiana that offer two-year business programs. All twelve of the state colleges and universities in Louisiana which offer two-year business programs were included in the study.

Data were collected from 258 students using a questionnaire based on one designed by Echols (1990), but with the following modifications: (1) Echols used four-year programs in her study while only two-year programs were used in this study. (2) Degree and major designations used by Echols were different from the degree and major designations used

in this study. The questionnaire was validated by a panel of experts in vocational education and educators on both two- and four-year college campuses in Louisiana. The questionnaire was field tested with a sample of 28 students located on both a two-year and a four-year campus. (These course sections were not used in the study.) Of the 258 students, 91 were enrolled in two-year business programs.

The instrument consisted of three parts. Part I included questions which described respondents on their specific choice of major, the degree of desirability of the various business majors as perceived by students, and factors which influenced choice of major; Part II included questions which dealt with general perceptions regarding careers in business; and Part III included questions regarding selected demographic characteristics.

Descriptive statistics were used to profile the demographic characteristics of the students, the perceived desirability of various business majors, the perceived influence of selected factors on students' choice of a business major, and the perceptions regarding business careers and majors.

Findings

A summary of the major findings of the study include:

1. Over three-fourths (85.2%) of the respondents were 29 years old or younger. The mean age was 23.2.
2. Seventy-eight percent of the respondents reported being single.
3. Sixty-eight (74.7%) respondents reported having no dependents.
4. Over one-half of the respondents reported being employed (full time employment 17.7% and parttime employment 46.7%).
5. Almost three-fourths of the respondents (71%) reported living at home.
6. Approximately one-half of the respondents (41.7%) reported being raised in communities with populations of greater than 25,000.
7. Almost one-half (42.1%) of the respondents classified their mothers as being employed in Service Occupations. Of the respondents' fathers, almost one-half (46.5%) of the respondents reported fathers employed in Professional, Technical, or Managerial Occupations.
8. Over one-half (63.3%) of the respondents indicated college grade point averages which ranged from 2.50

to 3.49. The mean college grade point average was 2.80.

9. Forty-eight (59.3%) respondents indicated high school grade point averages which ranged from 2.50 to 3.49. The mean high school grade point average was 2.85.
10. Seventy-six percent of the respondents were Caucasian.
11. Over one-half (60%) of the respondents had college preparation as the primary focus of their high school education.
12. Sixty (69.2%) respondents indicated Accounting, Business Administration, or Computer Information Technology/Data Processing as their choice of academic major.
13. The transfer and non transfer groups were compared on the following demographic characteristics: age, college grade point average, high school grade point average, number of dependents, gender, marital status, employment status, employment necessity to continue education, employment directly related to present curriculum, spouse employment, residential, community population status, and ethnicity.

There were no major differences found between the groups.

14. The transfer and non transfer groups were compared on the demographic characteristic high school preparation. Significant differences were found between the groups. Twenty (38.5%) respondents who had earned a general high school education were enrolled in a transfer program while only 9 (24.3%) respondents with the same type of high school education were enrolled in a non transfer program. Also, the proportion of students with a vocational education was higher in the non transfer group than in the transfer group (16.2% vs. 1.9%).

15. Six factors were perceived by respondents to have "much importance" (3.50 - 4.49) to the students enrolled in transfer programs when selecting their major. The respondents chose the following factors as reasons for selecting a major:

    (1) potential income (mean = 4.24)

    (2) type of work involved in this field (mean = 3.98)

    (3) prestige of the job (mean = 3.76)

    (4) offers broad job opportunities (mean = 3.67)

(5) demand for people with this degree (mean = 3.57)

(6) start own business (mean = 3.52)

16. The factor perceived by the respondents enrolled in transfer programs as the single most influential in selecting a business major was "potential income (n = 17, 32.7%)."

17. Four factors were perceived by respondents to have "much importance" (3.50 - 4.49) to the students enrolled in non transfer programs when selecting their major. The respondents chose the following factors as reasons for selecting a major:

(1) type of work involved in this field (mean = 4.29)

(2) potential income (mean = 3.88)

(3) offers broad job opportunities (mean = 3.74)

(4) to be of service to people (mean = 3.60)

18. The factor perceived by the respondents enrolled in non transfer programs as the single most influential in selecting a business major was "type of work involved in this field (n = 11, 32.4%)."

19. The transfer and non transfer groups were compared on the influence of selected factors in the

selection of a business major. One significant difference was found between the groups. "To start my own business had a higher mean importance score (mean = 3.52) in the transfer group. The non transfer group had a mean importance score of 2.83.

20. The three majors with the highest perceived desirability score by respondents enrolled in transfer programs were:
    (1) Business Administration (mean = 3.38)
    (2) Accounting (mean = 3.17)
    (3) Computer Information Technology/Data Processing (mean = 3.06).
21. Accounting was perceived to be the most desirable business major by the largest number of transfer students (31.4%).
22. The two majors with the highest perceived desirablilty score by respondents enrolled in non transfer programs were:
    (1) Computer Information Technology/Data Processing (mean = 3.85)
    (2) Business Administration (mean = 3.31).
23. Computer Information Technology/Data Processing was perceived to be the most desirable business major

by the largest number of non transfer students (32.4%).

24. The transfer and non transfer groups were compared on the perceived desirability of various business majors. Significant differences were found between the groups for six of the majors. The majors for which differences were identified were perceived as more desirable by non transfer students than by transfer students. These majors included:
    (1) Computer Information Technology/Data Processing (transfer group mean = 3.06, non transfer group mean = 3.85)
    (2) Secretarial Management (transfer group mean = 1.77, non transfer group mean = 2.52)
    (3) Office Administration--Word Processing (transfer group mean = 2.42, non transfer group mean = 3.18)
    (4) Office Administration--Secretarial (transfer group mean = 1.92, non transfer group mean = 2.64)
    (5) Management Assistant (transfer group mean = 2.56, non transfer group mean = 3.07)

(6) Office Information Systems (transfer group mean = 2.46, non transfer group mean = 2.97).

25. The perception statement, "There is an increased demand for people with computer programming skills (mean = 4.33)," received the highest mean score. This statement scored in the "agree" category.

26. The transfer and non transfer groups were compared on perception statements about various careers and two-year business majors. Fourteen differences were found on the 48 statements. On 13 of the 14 statements, non transfer had significantly higher degrees of agreement. For example, "There is not much demand for a 2-year non transfer degree," (transfer group mean = 2.96, non transfer group mean = 3.88), but "Computer science is the field of choice for nerds" was rated higher by the transfer group (transfer group mean = 1.88, non transfer group mean = 1.52).

27. The four majors with the highest overall group mean subscores of agreement with perception statements were:

(1) Accounting (mean = 3.71)

(2) Management Assistant (mean = 3.55)

(3) General Business (mean = 3.54)

(4) Business Technology (mean = 3.50)

These majors scored in the "favorable" category.

28. The transfer and non transfer groups were compared on perception subscores. Management Assistant was rated higher by the non transfer group (transfer group mean = 3.35, non transfer group mean = 3.55). This was the only difference found between the groups.

Conclusions, Implications, and Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher makes the following conclusions, implications, and recommendations:

1. The majority of the respondents were under 25 years years old, were single, and had no dependents.

This conclusion is based on the findings of the respondents: 75 percent were under 25 years of age, 78 percent were single, and 74.7 percent had no dependents.

2. Over half of the respondents were employed.

This conclusion is based on the finding that 17.7 percent of the respondents reported being employed full time, while 46.7 percent reported being employed parttime.

3. Almost half of the respondents had college grade point averages ranging from 3.00 to 4.00.

This conclusion is based on the finding that 46 percent of the respondents had GPAs which ranged from 3.00 to 4.00.

4. Respondents enrolled in transfer and non transfer programs were similar when compared on selected demographic characteristics.

This conclusion is based on the findings that when comparing the demographic characteristics: age, college grade point average, high school grade point average, number of dependents, gender, marital status, employment status, employment necessity to continue education, employment directly related to present curriculum, spouse employment, residential status, community population status, and ethnicity between the transfer and non transfer groups, there were no major differences found between the groups.

5. Respondents enrolled in transfer and non transfer programs differed on high school preparation.

This conclusion is based on the findings that 38.5 percent of the respondents who had earned a general high school education were enrolled in a transfer program while only 24.3 percent of the respondents with the same type of high school education were enrolled in a non transfer program.

Also, the proportion of respondents with a vocational education was higher in the non transfer group than in the transfer group (16.2 percent vs. 1.9 percent). This conclusion is not consistent with the findings of Velez and Javalgi (1987). This study reported that belonging to a college preparatory track while in high school increased a student's probability of transferring, as compared to students in other high school curricula. "Tech Prep" and "High Schools That Work" programs might be strong indicators as to why more respondents with a vocational education were enrolled in non transfer programs.

Based on these findings and conclusion, the researcher recommends further research be done to determine if there are specific differences between the high school general education track and the high school vocational education track. A recommendation for practice would be for colleges and universities that offer two-year business programs to concentrate their recruitment efforts in high school vocational education programs. Another recommendation for practice would be to compare high school transcripts of general education graduates and vocational education graduates to determine if there are similarities and differences.

6. Six factors were perceived to have "much importance" to the respondents enrolled in transfer programs when selecting a major. These included:

(1) potential income

(2) type of work involved in this field

(3) prestige of the job

(4) offers broad job opportunities

(5) demand for people with this degree

(6) start own business

The factors, "potential income," "type of work involved in this field," "prestige of the job," "offers broad job opportunities," and "demand for people with this degree" are the same factors found in a study by Echols (1990).

7. Four factors were perceived to have "much importance" to the respondents enrolled in non transfer programs when selecting a major. These included:

(1) type of work involved in this field

(2) potential income

(3) offers broad job opportunities

(4) to be of service to people

The factors, "type of work involved in this field," "potential income," and "offers broad job opportunities," are the same results found by Echols in 1990.

8. Factors influencing the respondents to select a major were similar for both transfer and non transfer students.

This conclusion is based on the finding that six of the highest rated seven factors were the same for both groups. The order varied somewhat, but the items rated the highest were very similar. Only one variable, "to start my own business," was found to be significantly more important to transfer students than to non transfer students. This suggests that transfer students might be more motivated to earn a four-year degree. This motivation might encourage these students to become their own bosses, instead of working for others.

Based on the findings and conclusion, the researcher recommends for practice that the factors rated the highest by respondents should be emphasized when colleges and universities prepare recruitment materials. For example, state specific salary ranges for various occupations, define job tasks performed by the employee, and list specific job opportunities for someone employed in a particular occupation. After the materials are designed and used in the recruitment process, the researcher recommends additional research to determine the effectiveness of the materials.

9. Respondents enrolled in transfer and non transfer programs had different perception scores regarding desirability of major.

This conclusion is based on the findings that significant differences were found between the groups for six of the eleven majors:

(1) Computer Information Technology/Data Processing (transfer group mean = 3.06, non transfer group mean = 3.85)

(2) Secretarial Management (transfer group mean = 1.77, non transfer group mean = 2.52)

(3) Office Administration--Word Processing (transfer group mean = 2.42, non transfer group mean = 3.18)

(4) Office Administration--Secretarial (transfer group mean = 1.92, non transfer group mean = 2.64)

(5) Management Assistant (transfer group mean = 2.56, non transfer group mean = 3.07)

(6) Office Information Systems (transfer group mean = 2.46, non transfer group mean = 2.97).

Based on the findings and conclusion, there were differences between students enrolled in transfer and non

transfer programs regarding perceived desirability of major. This seems to indicate that non transfer students are focusing more on the types of majors for which four-year degrees are not needed.

10. Accounting, Management Assistant, General Business, and Business Technology had favorable ratings by the respondents on perception statements regarding business majors and careers.

This conclusion is based on the findings that the four majors with the highest overall group mean subscores of agreement with perception statements were:

(1) Accounting (mean = 3.71)

(2) Management Assistant (mean = 3.55)

(3) General Business (mean = 3.54)

(4) Business Technology (mean = 3.50)

Only one difference was found between the transfer and the non transfer perception subscores. Management Assistant was rated higher by the non transfer group, (transfer group mean = 3.35, non transfer group mean = 3.55). This seems to indicate that non transfer students are focusing more on the type of major for which a four-year degree is not needed.

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APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE

FACTORS AFFECTING STUDENTS' DECISIONS TO SELECT A BUSINESS MAJOR

INTRODUCTION:

1. Which of the following best describes the program in which you are enrolled at your current institution?
____2-year program (associate/transfer)
____4-year program (baccalaureate degree)

If you checked 4 year, **DO NOT** continue. Simply turn in the questionnaire. If you checked 2 year, please go on to question number 2.

2. Which of the following best describes the 2-year program in which you are enrolled?
____2-year transfer program
____2-year non transfer program (associate degree)

Continue with Part I

Part I

A. Which of the following 2-year business majors is the one you have selected or plan to select? Please check only one response.

____Accounting
____Business Administration
____Business Technology
____Computer Information Technology/Data Processing
____General Business
____Management Assistant
____Office Administration (Secretarial)
____Office Administration (Word Processing)
____Office Information Systems
____Real Estate
____Secretarial Management

B. Please rate the degree of DESIRABILITY of EACH of the majors listed below. Circle the number on the right that indicates your response using the scale provided (1 = Extremely Undesirable Major -- 5 = Extremely Desirable Major).

	Extremely Undesirable Major	Very Undesirable Major	Desirable Major	Very Desirable Major	Extremely Desirable Major
1. Accounting	1	2	3	4	5
2. Business Administration.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Business Technology	1	2	3	4	5
4. Computer Information Technology/Data Processing	1	2	3	4	5
5. General Business	1	2	3	4	5
6. Management Assistant	1	2	3	4	5
7. Office Administration (Secretarial)	1	2	3	4	5
8. Office Administration (Word Processing)	1	2	3	4	5
9. Office Information Systems	1	2	3	4	5
10. Real Estate	1	2	3	4	5
11. Secretarial Management	1	2	3	4	5

C. Please write the number of the major from the list above that you would consider as the **single most desirable** major. _____

D. There may be a variety of reasons why people select a particular business major. The following is a list of possible reasons for selecting a major. For EACH reason please indicate how much influence it had on **your** decision to select your major by circling the appropriate number. (1 = No Importance -- 5 = Great Importance)

	Extremely Undesirable Major	Very Undesirable Major	Desirable Major	Very Desirable Major	Extremely Desirable Major
1. Potential for high income	1	2	3	4	5
2. Opportunity to return home to a position	1	2	3	4	5
3. To be of service to people	1	2	3	4	5

	No Importance	Little Importance	Some Importance	Much Importance	Great Importance
4. Potential travel opportunities	1	2	3	4	5
5. Parental influence	1	2	3	4	5
6. To start my own business	1	2	3	4	5
7. Prestige of the job	1	2	3	4	5
8. Type of work involved in this field	1	2	3	4	5
9. Demand for people with this degree	1	2	3	4	5
10. Offers broad job opportunities	1	2	3	4	5
11. Influence of high school guidance counselors	1	2	3	4	5
12. Influence of a summer job	1	2	3	4	5
13. Took related courses in high school	1	2	3	4	5
14. Influence of friends	1	2	3	4	5
15. Abundance of information supplied on major	1	2	3	4	5
16. Influence of high school teacher	1	2	3	4	5
17. Transferability of credit hours	1	2	3	4	5
18. Prestige of degree program	1	2	3	4	5
19. Other (specify)	1	2	3	4	5

E. Please write the number of the item in the list above that was the **single most important** factor in selecting your major. _____

IF YOU ARE ENROLLED IN A 2-YEAR TRANSFER PROGRAM, please continue with sections F and G.

IF YOU ARE ENROLLED IN A 2-YEAR NON TRANSFER PROGRAM, SKIP SECTIONS F and G and go on to Part II.

F. One program you could have selected was a **2-year non transfer program.** From the following list of factors please indicate how much influence EACH had on your decision **NOT** to select a 2-year non transfer program as your major by circling the appropriate number. (1 = No Importance -- 5 = Great Importance)

	No Importance	Little Importance	Some Importance	Much Importance	Great Importance
1. Potential for high income	1	2	3	4	5
2. Little opportunity to return home to work	1	2	3	4	5
3. Do not enjoy working with people	1	2	3	4	5
4. Lack of travel opportunities	1	2	3	4	5
5. Parental influence	1	2	3	4	5
6. Want to start my own business	1	2	3	4	5
7. A 2-year non transfer program is not prestigious	1	2	3	4	5
8. Transferability of credit hours	1	2	3	4	5
9. No demand for people with this degree	1	2	3	4	5
10. Does not offer broad job opportunities	1	2	3	4	5
11. Not recommended by high school guidance counselor	1	2	3	4	5
12. No opportunity to test field with summer job	1	2	3	4	5
13. Had no high school courses in business	1	2	3	4	5
14. My friends did not choose this major	1	2	3	4	5
15. Familiarity with a 2-year non transfer program as a major	1	2	3	4	5
16. Not recommended by high school teacher	1	2	3	4	5
17. Prestige of degree program	1	2	3	4	5
18. Career opportunities available with a 2-year non transfer program	1	2	3	4	5
19. Other (specify)	1	2	3	4	5

G. Please write the number of the item from the list above that was the single most important factor in your decision **NOT** to select a 2-year non transfer program as your major. _____

Continue with Part II

Part II

The following are statements about various business careers or majors. Please indicate your degree of **agreement or disagreement** with each statement by circling the appropriate response in the column. (SD = Strongly Disagree to SA = Strongly Agree)

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
1.	People with strong mathematics aptitude do best in accounting	SD	D	U	A	SA
2.	The brightest students in the business (school/department/program) major in a 2-year non transfer program	SD	D	U	A	SA
3.	Business administration offers more opportunities than other business majors	SD	D	U	A	SA
4.	The most glamorous business major is management	SD	D	U	A	SA
5.	Computer science is the field of choice for nerds	SD	D	U	A	SA
6.	Salaries for 2-year non transfer degree majors are low	SD	D	U	A	SA
7.	The need for support staff with office administration/secretarial management/ executive secretary/office information systems skills is increasing	SD	D	U	A	SA
8.	The business program with the lowest prestige is a 2-year non transfer degree	SD	D	U	A	SA
9.	General business is too broad to prepare for most occupations	SD	D	U	A	SA
10.	If you cannot do anything else, you can earn a 2-year non transfer degree	SD	D	U	A	SA
11.	Computer information systems prepares one for broad job opportunities	SD	D	U	A	SA
12.	The office administration/secretarial management/executive secretary/office information systems major is for secretaries only	SD	D	U	A	SA
13.	There are high-level positions for 2-year non transfer degree majors	SD	D	U	A	SA
14.	Accounting is too personal and deals with too many social issues	SD	D	U	A	SA
15.	There is not much demand for a 2-year non transfer degree	SD	D	U	A	SA
16.	Office administration/secretarial management/executive secretary/office information systems majors have the advantage of learning specific business skills in addition to gaining a broad perspective	SD	D	U	A	SA
17.	The business administration major is too applied--not enough emphasis on principles and theory	SD	D	U	A	SA
18.	There is an increased demand for people with computer programming skills	SD	D	U	A	SA
19.	Business technology prepares one not only for a career but for everyday life	SD	D	U	A	SA
20.	Computer majors are arrogant about their intelligence	SD	D	U	A	SA
21.	A major in a 2-year transfer degree is good preparation for a baccalaureate	SD	D	U	A	SA
22.	General business majors are not taught to think but rather to apply principles learned	SD	D	U	A	SA

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
23.	Two-year non transfer degree majors narrow their options in business	SD	D	U	A	SA
24.	A major in management sharpens one's communication skills	SD	D	U	A	SA
25.	Accounting has less professional status than other business majors	SD	D	U	A	SA
26.	People who major in office administration/secretarial management/ executive secretary/office information systems have an excellent chance for promotion to management	SD	D	U	A	SA
27.	Real estate is a good road to wealth.	SD	D	U	A	SA
28.	Two-year non transfer degree majors will have no relevance in the "real world"	SD	D	U	A	SA
29.	Computer majors do not relate well to people	SD	D	U	A	SA
30.	Management prepares one for strategic planning in the small business as well as the large corporation.	SD	D	U	A	SA
31.	A 2-year non transfer program is a narrow concentration.	SD	D	U	A	SA
32.	Accounting is a growing field of employment with high paying jobs throughout the nation	SD	D	U	A	SA
33.	Computer majors usually can work flexible hours	SD	D	U	A	SA
34.	Real estate does not provide a steady income	SD	D	U	A	SA
35.	Management is too specialized--it does not cover other business functions	SD	D	U	A	SA
36.	Office administration/secretarial management/executive secretary/ office information systems majors are less ambitious than other business majors	SD	D	U	A	SA
37.	Two-year non transfer majors are less ambitious than baccalaureate degree majors	SD	D	U	A	SA
38.	General business provides a broad background in business	SD	D	U	A	SA
39.	The interaction with people as a real estate agent is a rewarding experience	SD	D	U	A	SA
40.	General business prepares students for a wide spectrum of jobs	SD	D	U	A	SA
41.	Real estate provides for a flexible schedule in the work world	SD	D	U	A	SA
42.	The less academically-gifted students major in a 2-year non transfer program	SD	D	U	A	SA
43.	Office administration/secretarial management/executive secretary/ office information systems majors must be willing to work in subordinate roles	SD	D	U	A	SA
44.	Real estate allows one to pursue more than one career at a time	SD	D	U	A	SA
45.	Two-year non transfer degree majors make less money than baccalaureate degree majors	SD	D	U	A	SA
46.	People who major in office administration/secretarial management/ executive secretary/office information systems usually have good organizational skills, as well as technical skills	SD	D	U	A	SA

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
47. A major in business technology is too management oriented	SD	D	U	A	SA
48. Two-year non transfer degree majors usually have lower grade point averages	SD	D	U	A	SA

Continue with Part III

Part III

Please provide the following information by either writing in the information or selecting the appropriate response.

1. My age is ____
2. My gender is ____ female ____male
3. I am ____ single ____ widowed ____ divorced or separated ____ married
4. I have ____ number of dependents
5. I am employed ____yes (full time) ____yes (parttime) ____no (not employed)

   If yes, is employment necessary to continue your education ____yes ____no

   If employed, is employment directly related to your present curriculum choice ____yes ____no

   If married, is your spouse employed ____yes (full time) ____yes (parttime) ____no
6. I live ____at home ____dormitory ____"on my own"
7. I was raised in a

   ____ rural area (less than 2,500)

   ____town or small city (2,500 - 25,000)

   ____ large city (more than 25,000)

8. My mother's occupation is _____

   My father's occupation is _____

9. My cumulative GPA (grade point average) in college is____

10. My cumulative GPA (grade point average) in high school was____

11. Ethnicity

    ____African/American ____Caucasian ____Hispanic ____Asian

    ____Other (specify) _____

12. The primary focus of my high school education was (check **one**)

    ____college preparation ____general education ____vocational (prepared for job-entry skills)

Thank you for your cooperation!

APPENDIX B

OCCUPATION OF MOTHER

APPENDIX B

OCCUPATION OF MOTHER

Classification	n	%
Homemaker	28	34.8
Secretary	10	12.4
Teacher	7	8.7
Nurse	5	6.3
Manager	4	4.9
Accountant	4	4.9
Administrative Assistant	3	3.7
Administrative Bookkeeper	3	3.7
Social Worker	2	2.5
Sales Clerk	2	2.5
Maid	1	1.2
Retired	1	1.2
Cafeteria Worker	1	1.2
Crafter	1	1.2
Hair Dresser	1	1.2
Phone Representative	1	1.2
Pharmacist's Assistant	1	1.2
Technician	1	1.2
Barmaid	1	1.2
Cashier	1	1.2
Travel Assistant	1	1.2
Bus Driver	1	1.2
Dispatcher Operator	1	1.2
Total	81	100.0

Note. Ten students did not respond to this item.

APPENDIX C

OCCUPATION OF FATHER

APPENDIX C

OCCUPATION OF FATHER

Classification	n	%
Manager	9	12.9
Farmer	5	7.2
Businessman	4	5.7
Teacher	3	4.2
Postmaster	3	4.2
Mechanic	3	4.2
Accountant	2	2.8
Pipefitter	2	2.8
Retired	2	2.8
Attorney	2	2.8
Self-employed	2	2.8
Backhoe Operator	1	1.4
Offshore Worker	1	1.4
Health Unit Inspector	1	1.4
Oil Field Vice President	1	1.4
State Police	1	1.4
Driller	1	1.4
Principal	1	1.4
Lab Supervisor	1	1.4
Boiler Maker	1	1.4
Marketing Vice President	1	1.4
Lab Technician	1	1.4
Banker	1	1.4
Restaurant Owner	1	1.4
Stock Broker	1	1.4
Oil & Gas Company President	1	1.4
Trucker Driver	1	1.4
Chemical Engineer	1	1.4
Welder	1	1.4
Sales Clerk	1	1.4
Investment Specialist	1	1.4
Mall Manager	1	1.4
Physical Therapist	1	1.4
Computer Programmer	1	1.4

(table con'd.)

Classification	n	%
Engineer	1	1.4
Gas Station Attendant	1	1.4
Insurance Company Vice President	1	1.4
Dry Cleaner	1	1.4
Telecommunications	1	1.4
District Court Clerk	1	1.4
Airline Supervisor	1	1.4
Purchasing Agent	1	1.4
Electrician	1	1.4
Painter	1	1.4
Maintenance	1	1.4
Total	71	100.0

Note. Twenty students did not respond to this item.

APPENDIX D

LOUISIANA COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

APPENDIX D

LOUISIANA COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

Bossier Parish Community College

Delgado Community College

Elaine P. Nunez Community College

Louisiana State University Eunice

Louisiana Tech University

McNeese State University

Nicholls State University

Northeastern Louisiana University

Northwestern State University

Southeastern Louisiana University

Southern University at New Orleans

University of Southwestern Louisiana

VITA

Norma Jeanne Jenkins Soileau was born in Alexandria, Louisiana, on April 14, 1952, the only child of Norman and Helen Jenkins. She graduated on June 2, 1970, from Oberlin High School in Oberlin, Louisiana, as valedictorian of her class. On December 21, 1973, she was awarded the Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Education from Northwestern State University in Natchitoches, Louisiana. She entered graduate school at Northwestern State University and was awarded the Master of Science Degree in Business Education on December 19, 1974, and the Specialist Degree in Education on July 28, 1978. While in graduate school, she was a teaching assistant in the Department of Business-Distributive Education and Office Administration.

In the Fall of 1975 she was employed at Louisiana State University Eunice as an instructor in the Division of Business Administration. Twenty years later she holds the title of assistant professor of office administration in the Division of Business and Technology at Louisiana State University Eunice. For one year, while pursuing the doctorate degree, she taught business education courses at Louisiana State University as part of a graduate assistantship.

DOCTORAL EXAMINATION AND DISSERTATION REPORT

Candidate: Norma Jeanne Jenkins Soileau

Major Field: Vocational Education

Title of Dissertation: Factors Influencing the Selection of Business Majors as Perceived by Transfer and Non Transfer Business Students

Approved:

Major Professor and Chairman

Dean of the Graduate School

EXAMINING COMMITTEE:

Date of Examination:

March 29, 1995